# WONDER STORIES from the MABINOGION

EDWARD BROOKS

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/wonderstoriesfro00brooiala

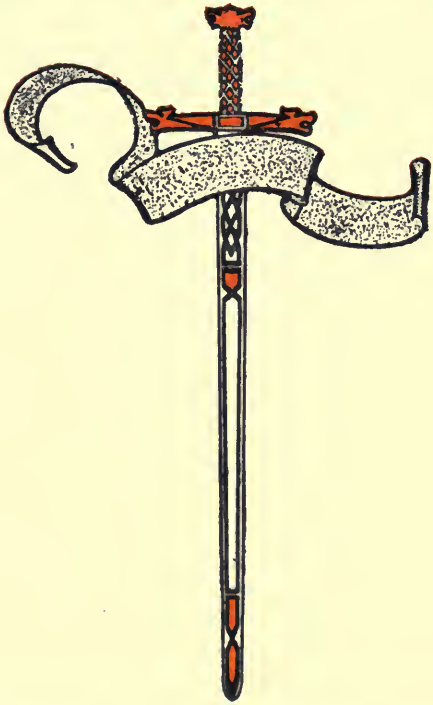
Right glad was the Countess of their coming

# Wonder Stories from the Mabinogion

BY DR EDWARD BROOKS A.M

*Author of*

"The Story of King Arthur", "The Story of Tristram" etc.



THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

PHILADELPHIA MCMIX

COPYRIGHT
1908 BY
THE PENN
PUBLISHING
COMPANY

SRLF
URL
OC/94416 5

# PREFACE

The stories of this book had their origin in Wales as early perhaps as the fifth or sixth century. They are the product of the early Welsh people, who were noted for their active fancy, vivid imagination, and love of the marvelous. They show a simple and childlike spirit that finds a ready belief in the deeds of magic and enchantment, and are thus a mirror of the character of the early Celtic people whom we call Britons. It is believed that these wonder stories, so full of heroic adventures and supernatural incidents, will be found of especial interest to the young.

The people of Wales, like the primitive people of other nations, were at an early date given to the reciting of marvelous adventures in both prose and poetry. These adventures were sung by their bards and related by their story tellers from one generation to another, and were thus preserved as folk lore throughout the centuries. At length when a knowledge of writing was introduced they were put into a permanent form of written manuscripts to be preserved for modern times. These manuscripts are found in the public libraries of sev-

eral institutions, as the British Museum, Jesus College at Oxford, the University of Cambridge, and in the hands of private individuals. So difficult were they of access and so few scholars understood the Welsh language that for many years no successful attempt was made to give them to the world of English readers.

One of the earliest attempts to present these manuscripts to the public was that of Mr. Owen Jones, who in 1801-3 published in three volumes a large number of ancient Welsh poems and prose compositions. Mr. Jones was a furrier in London and the son of a Welshman, and his patriotic spirit is shown in the fact that the publication of these volumes cost him a considerable share of his fortune. Edward Williams, a stone mason, was the chief contributor to the collection, and Dr. William Owen was the author of the principal dictionary of the Welsh terms used. Owing to a lack of knowledge and critical judgment on the part of the translators and compilers, the work proved of little value and attracted but little attention at that time.

The most noted of these manuscripts was called the Red Book of Hergest, so called from Hergest Court, one of the seats of the Vaughns, for whom it was probably compiled. This important manuscript, the chief repository of Welsh literature, is a folio volume of 360 leaves of vellum, written in double columns at different times from the early

part of the fourteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century. It has lain for many years and is now in the library of Jesus College, Oxford. It contains a body of poems together with eleven prose tales, four of which are called *Mabinogion*, the plural of *Mabinogi*, or *tale*, or as sometimes rendered, *Tales for Youth.*

This manuscript had aroused the interest of English scholars and poets, and a translation of it was ardently desired, but the difficulty was to find persons competent to do the work. The Welsh is a spoken language among the peasantry of Wales, but was largely neglected by scholars outside of the natives of the country. Of the few Welsh scholars none were found who took sufficient interest in these old poems and tales to attempt to give them to the English public. The literary men of England, among whom were Southey and Scott, who loved the old romantic legends of their country, often urged upon Welsh literati the duty of translating the *Mabinogion* into English. Through the influence and with the assistance of Dr. William Owen, Sharen Jones translated a portion of the work of which the poet Southey said "it is delightfully translated into so Welsh an idiom and syntax that such a translation is as instructive as the original." But it is presumed that the translator had an imperfect knowledge of literary English and the work was never published.

# Preface

At length, in the early part of the nineteenth century, there appeared an individual of the requisite knowledge of the two languages and of enthusiasm sufficient for the task, and also of pecuniary resources sufficient to be independent of the booksellers and the reading public. This person was Lady Charlotte Guest, an English lady, the wife of a gentleman of property in Wales, who having acquired a knowledge of the Welsh language and possessing an enthusiastic admiration for these literary treasures, set herself to their translation. In 1838 she published in four octavo volumes a translation of the eleven prose tales of the Red Book, accompanied by their Welsh originals and a mass of useful and scholarly notes.

Several of these tales, it will be seen, refer to King Arthur and some of the Knights of the Round Table. They were probably conceived at a much earlier period than those presented in Sir Thomas Malory's "Morte D'Arthur"; but they, with other tales of that early period not reduced to writing, may have constituted the original germs of the Arthurian romances which later overspread Europe and were finally put in permanent and poetic form by the genius of Malory. Geoffrey of Monmouth, it will be remembered, published his History of the Britons in 1156, and in it he states that the source of his material was a Welsh book

given him by a certain person since supposed to be a Walter Map or Mapes.

The origin of the characters and incidents of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table is undoubtedly due to the bards and storytellers of Wales. In the bardic songs and elsewhere frequent allusion is made to this heroic prince who with his warriors resisted the Saxon invaders of Britain. His deeds were magnified by the Welsh Britons, and the chroniclers wove these traditions into a legendary history of Britain, and from this source Geoffrey constructed his work, which the poets of chivalry, allured by the beauty and pathos of the tale, made for several centuries the centre of the most glowing pictures of romance. These tales passed over into France and were especially popular with that romantic people. Modified by the classic taste and inventive genius of the Normans, they received their final and exquisitely beautiful form through the poetic genius of Malory.

The stories of the Mabinogion, while full of strange and interesting adventures, are inferior in literary finish and poetic beauty to those of Malory. They indicate a much earlier and ruder period of society and a stronger belief in the influence of magic and in supernatural events and incidents. There is in these tales an almost complete absence of the spirit of Christianity, which like a golden thread runs through the entire narrative of the Ar-

thurian legends. But while sometimes rough and bloody, they are free from any incidents of indelicacy or impurity, in marked contrast to the Homeric poems and the early literature of Southern Europe. They indicate that the people of Wales were accustomed to modesty and purity of thought and speech, characteristics for which they are noted at the present time.

One marked feature of these tales, as already intimated, is their extravagance and lack of restraint as compared with the tales of King Arthur. Of the many instances of this nature we mention those of Sir Kay, who could remain for nine days and nights under water, and render himself as tall as the highest tree in the forest; of Bedyr, who had a lance that would produce a wound equal to those of nine opposing lances; of the courser of Kilwch whose tread was so light that the blades of grass bent not beneath it; of Menw who could cast a charm over a country that none of its people could see him and his companions, while they could see the people; of the making of the wife of Llew Llaw Gyffes out of flowers, and of the changing of her into an owl; of the stretching of the body of Bendigeid Vran across a river as a bridge upon which his army could pass over; of the changing of women into mice to feed upon the grain of Manawyddan, and changing them back again into women. But these wild flights of fancy, though detracting from

the literary merits of the tales, add to their interest for youthful readers who delight in the magical adventures of the Arabian Nights and works of a similar character.

Another striking feature of these stories is the intense feeling of color possessed by these early people of Wales. Thus in the story of Kilwch and Olwen we read the following exquisite description:—"The maiden was clothed in a robe of flame-colored silk; and about her neck was a collar of ruddy gold on which were precious emeralds and rubies. More yellow was her head than the flowers of the broom; and her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave; and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the vivid anemone amidst the spray of the meadow fountain. Her bosom was more snowy than the breast of the white swan; her cheek was redder than the reddest roses. Whoso beheld her was filled with love for her. Four white trefoils sprang up wherever she trod, and therefore she was called Olwen." Many other passages illustrate the delicate sense of these people to the charms of the hues and tints of land and sea. In this respect the Celts seem to have been much superior to the Greeks who, as represented by Homer, had a limited knowledge or appreciation of color, or but little taste for it in literary description.

The fondness of the early people of Wales for

ornaments of gold, silver, precious stones and costly fabrics is also apparent in these tales. In the Dream of Maxen Wledig we read: "And he saw a maiden sitting before him in a chair of ruddy gold. A vest of white silk was upon her, with clasps of red gold at the breast; and a surcoat of gold tissue upon her, and a frontlet of red gold upon her head, and rubies and gems were in the frontlet, alternating with pearls and imperial stones. And a girdle of ruddy gold was around her." In the Dream of Rhonabwy, in describing a Knight, we read,—"A golden helmet was upon the head of the Knight, wherein were set sapphire stones of great virtue. And at the top of the helmet was the figure of a flame colored lion with a fiery-red tongue issuing above a foot from his mouth," etc. These and other passages show the fondness of the early Celts for richness of apparel and costly ornaments; and are as perfect in their way as the similar descriptions in the Iliad picturing the dress of the warriors and Celestial deities.

Another peculiarity of these tales is the Quaker-like reserve in respect to titles. In Malory's book we are accustomed to the titles of King, Queen and Sir used before the names of the various people; as King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, Sir Gawaine, Sir Kay, etc.; while in the Mabinogion these titles are ignored and they are spoken to and of as Arthur, Guinevere, Gawaine, Kay, etc. In a num-

ber of cases, I have, in this version of the work, supplied the appropriate titles to the different characters especially to King Arthur and Queen Guinevere as seeming more in accord with the courteous spirit of the days of Knighthood.

There are eleven stories in the Mabinogion as translated by Lady Guest. All of these are given in this book, though their order has been somewhat changed with the purpose of securing greater variety and thus adding to the interest of young readers. Several of the stories are given almost verbatim, but most of them are abbreviated by omitting uninteresting details; and in many cases the language is slightly changed to correspond more nearly with present usage. Enough of the language of the translator, however, is retained to preserve the literary flavor and quaintness of the original. The story of "Sir Gawaine and the Red Knight" is selected from a source other than the Mabinogion.

I have also changed the names and the spelling of several characters to correspond with the same names or their equivalents in Malory's King Arthur. Thus in the Mabinogion we have "Gwenhwyvar" which is here changed to the simpler form of Guinevere; "Gwalchmai" is the "Sir Gawaine" of Malory's work, and in this book the latter form is used. Sir Kay is in the Mabinogion spelled Kai, but I have preferred to use the former spelling as

the readers of my "Story of King Arthur" and the "Story of Tristram" are familiar with that form. A few other changes have been made in the text to correspond with modern literary usage. The longer stories have been divided into chapters with the view of adding to the interest of young readers.

As in my other stories for the young, beginning with the Story of the Iliad, I have written this book for the information and interest of the boys and girls of my country. I have spent a long life in the education and supervision of the teachers of the young, and these young people are very near and dear to my heart. I realize that on their proper training in knowledge and virtue depend not only their own welfare but the future greatness and glory of the country; and I send forth this little volume of Wonder Tales in the hope and belief that it may contribute in some small degree to their culture and happiness.

EDWARD BROOKS

Philadelphia, Nov. 20, 1907.

# Preface

## The Pronunciation of Welsh Names

The spelling of Welsh proper names seems awkward and uncouth to the general reader, and they are difficult of correct pronunciation. For this reason I have omitted many names found in the original, and have modified the spelling of a few names, which are found also in King Arthur, as explained in the preface. A few directions in respect to the proper pronunciation of those names given in the work will be presented, though no written explanation can indicate the exact speech of the Welsh people. This must be heard and imitated in order that the ear and tongue may become accustomed to the sounds.

The letters presenting the greatest difficulties are *w*, *ll*, *y* and *ch*. The letter *w* is usually pronounced *oo* as in *cool*. Thus the name "Kilwch" is pronounced *Kilhooch*. Where the *w* precedes a vowel this sound of oo, of course, becomes practically the consonant sound of *w;* as for examples, *ooet* rapidly pronounced would become *wet;* so also in "Llywarch" or "Gwyddion," the *w* before the *a* and *y* would be sounded like the English *w*. The *ll* is similar to the Spanish *ll* in *llanos* but with an aspirated sound made by forcing the breath through the back teeth so forcibly as to give to the English ear the sound of a strongly lisped *s*. If the organs be arranged so as to pronounce the *y* in *yield* and the sound *lh* be vigorously forced in that

position, something like the Welsh *ll* results.

The letter *y*, if long, is like the German *ü*, or the French *u* in *une;* or very nearly like the English *ee* in *seen.* The *y* short is much like our short *u* except in the last syllable of words, where it is more like our short *i* in English.

The *ch* is gutteral, as in the Scotch word *loch* or the German *ach.* The vowels *a, e, i,* in the Welsh names are mostly sounded as short English *a, e, i;* the *o* as long *o;* the *u* as a rapidly pronounced *u.* The frequently recurring *aw* is like *ou* in our word *our*, or the German *au* in *haus.* The combination *dd* is very nearly like *th* in *then*, only with more of *d* than *t* blended with the sound of *h.*

The letter *c* is always *k*, *Celt* is pronounced *Kelt*, and *Cynon* as *Kynon;* there is no soft *c* in Welsh. The *f* is always *v;* it is *ff* that has the sound of *f* as in our word *fan.* The letter *g* is always hard as in *go;* the *th* is sounded as in our word *thanks*, but not as in *then.* All the other letters may be given the same sound that they have in English names.

These suggestions will enable the readers of these stories to give a fairly correct pronunciation of the names of the persons and places mentioned, though of course it would lack some of those peculiarities of articulation and intonation which give a peculiar flavor and richness to the Welsh tongue.

# CONTENTS


## THE LADY AND THE FOUNTAIN

PAGE

I. THE STRANGE ADVENTURE OF KYNON ..... 1
II. THE ADVENTURE OF OWAIN WITH THE COUNTESS ..... 10
III. GAWAINE GOES ON AN ADVENTURE IN SEARCH OF OWAIN .. 20
IV. OWAIN AGAIN FINDS THE COUNTESS ..... 31

## KILWCH AND OLWEN

I. HOW KILWCH SOUGHT OLWEN FOR HIS WIFE ..... 38
II. HOW KILWCH WON OLWEN FOR HIS WIFE ..... 57

## SIR GAWAINE AND THE GREEN KNIGHT ..... 71

## PEREDUR, THE SON OF EVRAWC

I. HOW PEREDUR BECAME A KNIGHT ..... 84
II. HOW PEREDUR RESCUED A FAIR LADY ..... 95
III. HOW PEREDUR AVENGED HIMSELF ON SIR KAY ..... 106
IV. HOW PEREDUR WON HIS LADY LOVE ..... 113
V. HOW PEREDUR SLEW THE SERPENT ADDANC ..... 121
VI. HOW PEREDUR SOUGHT THE CASTLE OF WONDERS ..... 134

## GERAINT AND ENID

I. HOW GERAINT WON ENID FOR HIS BRIDE ..... 146
II. HOW GERAINT CAME TO THE COURT OF KING ARTHUR .... 161
III. HOW GERAINT RETURNED FROM CORNWALL ..... 167
IV. HOW ENID AND GERAINT BECAME UNHAPPY ..... 173
V. HOW GERAINT MET ARTHUR AND GAWAINE ..... 188
VI. HOW GERAINT AND ENID BECAME HAPPY AGAIN ..... 193

## THE STORY OF PWYLL AND RHIANNON

I. HOW PWYLL WON RHIANNON FOR HIS BRIDE ..... 200
II. THE FALSE ACCUSATION AGAINST RHIANNON ..... 214

# Contents

PAGE

BRANWEN, THE DAUGHTER OF LLYR

I. How Branwen Became the Wife of Matholwch.....224
II. The Sad Fate of Branwen and Her Son.....235

THE STORY OF MANAWYDDAN AND THE MICE

I. How Manawyddan and Pryderi Were Lost in the Magic Castle.....243
II. How Manawyddan Rescued Pryderi and Rhiannon...253

THE DREAM OF MAXEN WLEDIG

I. The Dream of the Emperor Maxen Wledig.....263
II. How the Emperor Found the Object of His Dream...272

THE STORY OF LLUDD AND LLEVELYS .....278

LLEW LLAW AND HIS WIFE

I. How Llew Llaw Got His Name and His Wife.....287
II. The Fate of Llew Llaw and His Wife.....296

THE DREAM OF RHONABWY .....306

THE STORY OF TALIESEN.....325

# ILLUSTRATIONS


PAGE

RIGHT GLAD WAS THE COUNTESS OF THEIR COMING..... *Frontispiece*

THEN THEY SAW A GREAT SMOKE WHICH DID NOT BEND WITH THE WIND..... 67

AND BEHOLD ONE DAY ANGHARAD LAW EVRAWC MET HIM.....119

AS SHE SPOKE THE TEARS DROPPED FROM HER EYES ON HER HUSBAND'S BREAST.....174

THEY CAUSED THE BUTCHER TO COME TO HER EVERY DAY AND GIVE HER A BLOW.....229

AND WHEN HE CAME INTO THE COURT ARIANROD AROSE TO MEET HIM.....288

BUT WHEN THE BARD CAME HE COULD DO NOTHING BUT PLAY.....336

Dedication of Lady Charlotte Guest, the translator of the Mabinogion, to her two sons Ivor and Merthyr.

"My Dear Children:

"Infants as you are, I feel that I cannot dedicate more fitly than to you these venerable relics of ancient lore, and I do so in the hope of inciting you to cultivate the literature of "Wyllt Walia," in whose beautiful language you are being initiated and amongst whose free mountains you were born."

"May you become early imbued with the chivalric and exalted sense of honor, and the fervent patriotism for which its sons have ever been celebrated."

"May you learn to emulate the noble qualities of Ivor Hael, and the firm attachment to your Native Country, which distinguished that Ivor Bach, after whom the elder of you was named."

# Wonder Stories from the Mabinogion

## The Lady and the Fountain

### Chapter I

#### The Strange Adventure of Kynon

ONCE upon a time King Arthur was at Caerleon upon the Usk. And it chanced that he was in his chamber, and with him were Owain, son of Urien, and Kynon, son of Clydno, and Kay, the son of Kyner. And in the chamber also was Queen Guinevere, who sat with her hand-maidens at needlework by the window. In the centre of the chamber King Arthur sat upon a seat of green rushes over which was spread a covering of flame colored satin, and a cushion of red satin was under his elbow.

As the day drew to its close and they were waiting for the evening repast, King Arthur grew

drowsy and said, "I will sleep awhile and you may entertain one another with relating tales, and may also regale yourselves with a flagon of mead and some meat which Sir Kay will bring you." So the king went to sleep. Then Kynon asked Sir Kay to get that which King Arthur had promised them; to which Sir Kay replied that he would bring them forthwith and at the same time listen to the good tale which Kynon had promised. But Sir Kynon said that it would be better to have the good things to eat and drink first, and then he would tell them the best tale that he knew.

So Sir Kay went to the kitchen and to the mead cellar and soon returned bearing a flagon of mead, and a golden goblet, and a handful of skewers upon which were broiled collops of meat. Then they gathered around the table and began to eat the collops and drink the mead.

"Now," said Sir Kay, "it is time for Kynon to give us his story."

"Kynon," said Owain, "do thou pay to Sir Kay the tale that is his due."

To which Sir Kynon replied, "I will do so, though I know that thou art a better teller of tales than I am." Then Sir Kynon told the tale as we shall relate it.

"I was the only son of my father and my mother, and in my youth I was exceedingly aspiring and full of daring. Indeed, I thought there was no

enterprise in the world too mighty for me. So after I had achieved all the adventures that I could find in my own country, I set forth to journey throughout distant countries in search of new ones. And at length it chanced that I came to the fairest valley in the world, wherein were trees all of equal growth; and a river ran through the valley, and a path was by the side of the river. I followed the path until midday, and continued my journey along the rest of the valley until the evening; and at the end of a plain I came to a large and lustrous castle, at the foot of which was a torrent of water.

"As I approached the castle, I beheld two youths with yellow curling hair, each with a frontlet of gold upon his head and each clad in a garment of yellow satin; and they had golden clasps upon their insteps. In the hand of each of them was an ivory bow, strung with the sinews of the stag; and their arrows and their shafts were of the bone of the whale and were winged with peacocks' feathers. The shafts also had golden heads. And they had daggers in their belts with blades of gold and with hilts of the bone of the whale. And as I looked I saw that they were shooting with their arrows at a mark.

"A little way from these I saw a man in the prime of life, with his beard newly shorn, clad in a robe and mantle of yellow satin; and round the top of his mantle was a band of gold lace. On his feet

were shoes of variegated leather fastened by two bosses of gold. When I saw him I went towards him and saluted him; and as soon as he received my greeting he returned it, and bade me go with him towards the castle.

"Now in the castle were four and twenty damsels seated at the windows embroidering satin; and were the fairest maids that ever were seen in Britain, lovelier even than Queen Guinevere, the wife of King Arthur. They all rose up at my coming, and six of them took my horse and divested me of my armor; and six others took my arms and washed them in a vessel till they were perfectly bright. And the third six spread cloths upon the tables and prepared meat. And the fourth six took off my soiled garments, and placed upon me an under vest and a doublet of fine linen, and a robe and a surcoat, and a mantle of yellow satin with a broad gold band upon the mantle. And they placed cushions both beneath me and around me, with coverings of red linen upon which I was seated. Then they brought bowls of silver wherein was water to wash, and towels of linen, some green and some white; and I washed.

"And in a little while the man of the castle sat down to the table, and I sat next to him; and below me sat all the maidens except those who waited on us. The table was of silver and the cloths upon the table were of linen; and every vessel served upon

the table was either of gold or silver or buffalo horn. And there was brought meat of every kind and every sort of liquor that could be named.

"At the repast no one spoke a word until it was half over; but when the man who sat next to me saw that it would be agreeable for me to converse with him, he began to inquire of me who I was. Then I told the man who I was, and that I was seeking whether any one was superior to me, or whether I could gain the mastery over all. The man looked upon me and smiled, and said, 'If I did not fear to do thee a mischief, I would show thee that which thou seekest.'

"Upon this I became somewhat anxious and thoughtful, which when the man perceived it he said, 'Sleep here to-night and in the morning arise early, and take the road upward through the valley until thou reachest the wood through which thou camest hither. A little way within the wood thou wilt come to a large sheltered glade, with a mound in the centre. And on the top of the mound thou wilt see a black man of great stature, as large as two ordinary men. He has but one foot, and one eye in the middle of his forehead; and in his hand is a club of iron as large as two men could lift. He is the wood-ward of that wood; and around him thou wilt see a thousand wild animals grazing. Inquire of him the way out of the glade, and he will reply to thee briefly, and will point out the road by

which thou shalt find that which thou art in quest of.'

"Then we withdrew from the hall and sought our chambers of rest. Long seemed that night to me; but early next morning I arose and equipped myself, and mounted my horse, and proceeded straight through the valley to the wood, till at length I arrived at the glade. The black man was there, sitting upon the top of the mound, while around him were many wild animals. Huge of stature as the man had told me he was, indeed I found him to exceed by far the description he had given me. As for the iron club which the man had told me was a burden for two men, I am certain that it would be a heavy weight for four warriors to lift. Then I asked him what power he had over those animals.

" 'I will show thee, little man,' he said.

"And he took his club in his hand, and with it he struck a stag a great blow, so that he brayed vehemently; and at his braying the animals came together as numerous as the stars in the sky, so that it was difficult for me to find room in the glade to stand among them. There were serpents, and dragons, and divers sorts of animals wild and fierce. And he looked at them and bade them go and feed; and they bowed their heads, and did him homage as vassals to a lord.

"Then the black man said to me, 'Seest thou

now, little man, what power I hold over these animals?'

"When I saw his power over the animals I asked him the way, desiring to continue my journey. He asked me roughly whither I would go. And when I told him who I was and what I sought, he said to me, 'Take the path that leads toward the head of the glade, and there thou wilt find an open space like to a large valley, and in the midst of it a tall tree. Under this tree is a fountain, and by the side of the fountain a marble slab, and on the marble slab a silver bowl, fastened by a chain of silver so that it may not be carried away. Take the bowl, and throw a bowlful of water upon the slab. And if thou dost not find trouble in that adventure thou needest not seek it during the rest of thy life.'

"So I journeyed on until I reached the summit of the steep; and there I found everything as the black man had described it to me. And I went up to the tree, and beneath it I saw the fountain, and by its side the marble slab, and the silver bowl fastened by the chain. Then I took the bowl and cast a bowlful of water upon the slab; and immediately I heard a mighty peal of thunder, so that heaven and earth seemed to tremble with its fury. And after the thunder came a shower of hail stones; of a truth it was such a shower as neither man nor beast could endure and live. So I turned my horse's flank toward the shower, and placed the

back of my shield over his head and neck, while I held the upper part of it over my own neck. And thus I withstood the shower.

"And presently the sky became clear; and with that, behold, the birds lighted upon the tree and sang. And truly I never heard any melody equal to that either before or since. And when I was most charmed with listening to the birds, lo! a voice of one approaching was heard saying in chiding accents, 'O knight, what has brought thee hither? What evil have I done to thee that thou shouldst act toward me and my possessions as thou hast to-day? Dost thou not know that the shower to-day has left in my dominions neither man nor beast alive that was exposed to it?'

"And thereupon, behold, a knight on a black horse appeared, clothed in jet black velvet, and with a tabard of black linen about him. And we charged upon each other, and as the onset was furious, it was not long before I was overthrown. Then the knight passed his lance through the bridle rein of my horse, and rode off with the two horses, leaving me alone where I was. So I returned on foot along the road by which I had come; and when I reached the glade where the black man was, I confess that I felt to sink to the ground by the shame I felt at the black man's derision.

"Onward I walked until by night I came to the

same castle where I had spent the preceding night; and there I was more agreeably entertained than I was the night before. I conversed freely with the inmates of the castle; and none of them alluded to my expedition to the fountain, neither did I mention it to any. When I arose on the morrow, I found ready saddled a dark bay palfrey, with nostrils as red as scarlet; and after putting on my armor and leaving there my blessing, I returned to my own court. And that horse I still possess, and he is in the stable yonder; and I declare I would not part with him for the best palfrey in the island of Britain. And now of a truth it seems strange to me that neither before nor since have I heard of any person who knew of this adventure; and more strange that the subject of it should exist within King Arthur's dominion without any other person lighting upon it."

## CHAPTER II

### THE ADVENTURE OF OWAIN WITH THE COUNTESS

AT the story of Sir Kynon they marvelled, and Owain said, "Would it not be well to go and endeavor to discover this place?" To this they all assented, and especially Queen Guinevere. And King Arthur, who had been sleeping, now awoke, and also gave his assent to the adventure. Then the horn for washing was sounded, and the king and all his household sat down to eat. And when the meal was ended, Owain withdrew to his lodging and made ready his horse and his arms.

On the morrow with the dawn of day he put on his armor and mounted his charger and started on his adventure. He rode through many countries until at length he came to a beautiful valley, through which flowed a river with green meadows on either side as Sir Kynon had described. Journeying along the valley, by the side of the river, he followed its course till he came to the plain, and then beheld a large and stately castle. As he approached the castle he saw the youths shooting with their arrows in the place where Sir Kynon had

seen them, and the yellow man to whom the castle belonged standing hard by. And no sooner had Owain saluted the yellow man than he was saluted by him in return.

As he went forward towards the castle he saw within it a chamber, and when he had entered the chamber, he beheld the four and twenty maidens seated in chairs of gold working at satin embroidery. And their beauty and their comeliness seemed to Owain far greater than Sir Kynon had represented to him. And they all arose to wait upon Owain as they had done to Sir Kynon. And the meal which they set before him was the most splendid that ever he had seen.

About the middle of the feast the yellow man asked Owain the object of his journey. To this Owain replied, "I am in quest of the knight who guards the fountain." Upon this the yellow man smiled, and said that he was as loath to point out that adventure to him as he had been to Sir Kynon. However, he described the whole to Owain, and after that they retired to rest.

The next morning Owain found his horse made ready for him by the damsels; and he set forward and came to the glade where the black man was. And the stature of the black man seemed more wonderful to Owain than it had done to Kynon; and Owain asked him of his road, and he showed it to him. Owain followed the road, as Kynon

had done, until he came to the green tree; and he beheld the fountain and the slab beside the fountain with the bowl upon it. Then Owain took the bowl and threw a bowlful of water upon the slab; and, lo! the thunder was heard, and after the thunder came the shower, and more violent than Kynon had described it; and after the shower the sky became bright again. And immediately the birds came and settled on the tree and sang.

And just when the song of the birds was most pleasing to Owain, he beheld a knight coming toward him through the valley; and he prepared to meet him; and the two knights rode together and encountered with great force. Their lances were both shivered, and then they drew their swords and fought blade to blade. At length Owain struck the knight a blow through the helmet, head piece and visor, and through the skin and the flesh and the bone, until it wounded the very brain. Then the black knight felt that he had received a mortal wound, upon which he turned his horse's head and fled. And Owain pursued him, and followed close upon him, although he was not near enough to him to strike him with his sword.

Thereupon Owain descried a vast and resplendent castle; and they came to the castle gate. And the black knight was allowed to enter; and as Owain followed him the portcullis was let fall, and

it struck his horse behind the saddle, and cut him in two, and carried away the rowels of the spurs that were upon Owain's heels. And the portcullis descended to the floor. And the rowels of the spurs and part of the horse were without; and Owain with the other part of the horse remained between the two gates; and the inner gate was closed so that Owain could not go thence; and he was perplexed to know what to do.

Now while he was in this state it chanced that through an aperture in the gate he saw a street with a row of houses on each side. And as he looked he beheld a maiden, with yellow curling hair, and a frontlet of gold upon her head; and she was clad in a dress of yellow satin, and on her feet were shoes of variegated leather. And she came to the gate and desired that it should be opened.

"Heaven knows, fair lady," said Owain, "it is no more possible for me to open the gate than it is for thee to set me free." And he told her his name, and who he was.

"Truly," said the damsel, "it is very sad to see thee in such a state, and I will do what I can to release thee, for I know there is no one more faithful in the service of ladies than thou."

So she passed to him through the aperture a ring, and said, "Take this ring, and put it on thy finger, with the stone inside thy hand, and close thy hand

upon the stone. So long as thou concealest it, it will conceal thee, and when they come to fetch thee to put thee to death they will not be able to find thee. I will await thee on horseback yonder, and thou wilt be able to see me, though I cannot see thee; therefore come and place thy hand upon my shoulder, that I may know that thou art near me, and by the way that I go hence, do thou accompany me."

Then the maiden went away from Owain, and Owain did all as the damsel had told him. And the people of the castle came to seek Owain and to put him to death; and when they found nothing but half of his horse, they were amazed and sorely grieved. But Owain passed out unseen and went to the maiden and put his hand on her shoulder, and she led him to a large and beautiful chamber that was richly adorned with gorgeous colors and images of gold. And the maiden opened the door and they went therein and closed the doors after them. The maiden kindled a fire, and took water in a silver bowl and gave Owain water to wash. Then she placed before him a silver table, inlaid with gold, upon which was a cloth of yellow linen; and she served him with delicious food in vessels of gold and silver, the best he had ever eaten.

Now while Owain was eating, he heard a great clamor in the castle, and he asked the maiden the cause of it. "The lord of the castle has just died,"

she said, "and they are giving him the rites of the dead."

Then she prepared for him a noble couch upon which he lay down and slept all night. In the morning he was awakened by a loud clamor of wailing, and he asked the maiden the cause of it. "They are bearing the body of the dead lord who owned the castle to the place of burial," said the damsel.

Then Owain arose and clothed himself and opened a window of the chamber and looked toward the castle. In the street he beheld a vast crowd of armed men and of armed women in red attire, and in the midst of the throng was a bier on which lay the body of the knight he had slain. Behind it walked a lady with long yellow hair that fell over her shoulders, and her dress of yellow satin was all rent; and she smote her hands together and wailed bitterly. She was the fairest lady that Owain had ever seen, and as soon as he beheld her he became inflamed with love for her, so much that it took entire possession of him. Then he inquired of the maiden who the lady was.

"She is my mistress," replied the maiden, "and she is the fairest and most noble woman that ever was. She is called the Countess of the Fountain; and she is the wife of the knight whom thou didst slay yesterday."

"Verily," said Owain, "she is the woman that I love best in all the world."

"That is well," said the damsel, "and she shall also love thee not a little in return."

With that the maiden arose, and kindled a fire, and filled a pot with water and placed it to warm; and she brought a towel of white linen and placed it around Owain's neck; and she took a goblet of ivory and a silver basin, and filled them with warm water, wherewith she washed Owain's head. Then she opened a wooden casket and drew forth a razor whose haft was of ivory, and upon which were two rivets of gold. And she shaved his beard and she dried his head and his throat with the towel. Then she rose up before Owain and brought him to the repast; and after he had eaten she bade him lie on the couch and sleep while she would go and woo the lady for him.

So she softly shut the door of the chamber and went straightway to the castle of the lady whose lord had been slain. When she came there she found nothing but mourning and sorrow; and the Countess in her chamber could not bear the sight of any one on account of her grief. The damsel, whose name was Luned, and who was a favorite attendant of the Countess, went in and saluted her, but the Countess answered her not. And the maiden kneeled before her saying, "What aileth thee that thou answerest no one to-day?" And the

Countess sharply reproached the maiden for not mourning for her lord as all the rest were doing.

"Truly," said Luned, "I thought thy good sense was greater than I find it to be. Is it well for thee to mourn for that good man, or for anything else that thou canst not have?"

"I declare," said the Countess, "that in the whole world there is not a man equal to him."

"Not so," answered Luned, "for an ill-favored man that is alive, is now as good as or better than a good favored man that is dead."

At this the Countess was exceedingly wrathful, and declared to Luned that she would banish her from her court. Luned replied that the only cause for her speaking thus was her desire to render her mistress a service of which she stood in need. With that Luned started to go away, affecting great anger. Then the Countess arose and followed her to the door of the chamber, and began coughing loudly. And when Luned looked back the Countess beckoned to her, and she returned to the Countess.

Then said the Countess, "In truth evil is thy disposition; and yet if thou knowest what is to my advantage, declare it to me."

"That will I," answered Luned. And then she said, "Thou knowest that unless thou canst defend the fountain thou canst not maintain thy dominions; and no one can defend the fountain except

a knight of King Arthur's court. Now will I go thither, and ill betide me if I return not with a warrior who can guard the fountain as well as or better than he who formerly kept it."

"That will be hard to perform," said the Countess; "but go, however, and make proof of what thou hast promised."

So Luned went forth under pretence of going to King Arthur's court; but she went back to the chamber where she had left Owain; and she tarried there as long as it would have taken her to go to Caerleon and return. Then she went again to the Countess, who was much rejoiced to see her, and inquired what news she brought from the court.

"I bring thee the best news," said Luned, "for I have compassed the object of my mission. When wilt thou that I present to you the knight who has come with me hither?"

"Bring him here to visit me to-morrow at midday," said the Countess, "and I will have the people of the town assembled at that time."

So on the morrow at noon, Luned conducted Owain, all splendidly arayed in satin and gold with golden clasps upon his mantle, to the chamber of the Countess. Right glad was the Countess of their coming; and after gazing upon the knight for awhile she said, "Luned, the knight has not the look of a traveler."

"What harm is there in that, my lady," replied Luned boldly, as was her wont.

"I am certain," said the Countess, "that this is the man who chased the soul from the body of my lord."

"So much the better for thee, lady," returned Luned; "for had he not been stronger than thy lord he could not have slain him. There is no remedy for what is past, be it as it may."

"Go back to thine abode," said the Countess, "and I will take thy counsel."

The next day the Countess assembled all the chief men among her subjects, and showed them that her dominions could not be defended except by some knight of great prowess. "Therefore," she said, "if you can choose such an one from among yourselves, let him take me; and if not, give your consent that I should take a husband from elsewhere to defend my dominions."

So after much consultation they came to the determination that it would be better for the Countess to marry some one from elsewhere; and therefore she sent for the bishops and archbishops to celebrate her nuptials with Owain.

Thus Owain became the husband of the Countess, and all the men of the earldom did him homage. And Owain defended the fountain with lance and sword against all comers for the space of three years, and no man in the whole world was more beloved that he was by his subjects.

## CHAPTER III

### GAWAINE GOES ON AN ADVENTURE IN SEARCH OF OWAIN

AND now for three years Owain had been missed from King Arthur's court and no one knew where he was. And so it befell that as Gawaine went forth one day with King Arthur, he saw that the king was very sad and sorrowful. Gawaine was much grieved to see the king in this state, and he questioned him saying, "Oh, my lord, what has befallen thee?"

King Arthur said, "I am grieved concerning Owain, whom I have lost for these three years; and if the fourth year shall pass without my seeing him I shall certainly die. Now I am sure that it is through the tale that Kynon related that I have lost Owain."

To this Gawaine replied, "There is no need for thee to summon to arms thy whole dominion on this account, for thou thyself and the men of thy household will be able to avenge Owain, if he be slain; or to set him free if he be in prison; and, if alive, to bring him back to thee."

Then King Arthur and the men of his household prepared to go and seek for Owain; and Kynon,

the son of Clydno, acted as their guide. Soon they came to the castle where Kynon had been before; and there they saw the youths shooting in the same place, and the yellow man standing hard by. When the yellow man saw King Arthur and his knights he invited them into the castle; and they all entered the castle together. And so vast was the extent of the castle that the presence of King Arthur and his retinue was scarcely observed. And the twenty-four damsels rose up and waited upon them and their retinue, and their attendance was the best that had ever been seen by them. Even the pages who had charge of the horses were no worse served that night than King Arthur himself would have been in his own palace.

The next morning King Arthur and his knights set out thence and came to the place where the black man was; and the stature of the black man was more surprising to the King than it had been represented to him. And going forward they came to the top of the wooded steep, and traversed the valley till they reached the green tree, where they saw the fountain and the bowl and the slab.

Upon this Sir Kay came to King Arthur and spake to him, saying, "My lord, I know the meaning of all this; and my request is that thou wilt permit me to throw the water on the slab, and to receive the first adventure that may befall." And King Arthur gave him leave.

Then Sir Kay threw a bowlful of water upon the slab, and immediately there came the thunder, and after the thunder the shower; and such a thunder storm they had never known before, and many of the attendants who were in Arthur's train were killed by the shower. After the shower had ceased, the sky became clear, and on looking at the tree, they beheld that it was completely leafless. Then the birds descended upon the tree; and the song of the birds was far sweeter than any strain they had ever heard before. And anon they beheld a knight on a coal black horse, clothed in black satin, coming rapidly towards them. Then Sir Kay, as he had desired, rode to meet him; and it was not long before Sir Kay was overthrown. After which the knight withdrew, and King Arthur and his host encamped for the night.

When they arose in the morning they perceived the signal of combat upon the lance of the knight. And Sir Kay came to King Arthur and spoke to him, saying: "My lord, though I was overthrown yesterday, if it seem good to thee I would gladly meet the knight again to-day."

"You may do so," said King Arthur, "if you desire."

Then Sir Kay went towards the knight, and the knight struck him on the forehead with the head of his lance, to that it broke his helmet and the headpiece, and pierced the skin and the flesh even

to the bone. At which Sir Kay returned to his companions.

Then, one by one, all the household of King Arthur went forth to combat the knight, until there was not one that was not overthrown by him, except King Arthur and Gawaine. And Arthur armed himself to encounter the knight; but Gawaine said, "Oh, my lord, permit me to fight with him first." And Arthur permitted him.

So Gawaine went forth to meet the knight, having over himself and his horse a satin robe of honor, which had been sent him by the daughter of the Earl of Rhangyw, and in this dress he was not known by any of the host. The two knights charged each other, and fought all that day until evening; and neither was able to unhorse the other. And so it was the next day; they broke their lances in the shock, but neither of them could obtain the mastery.

And the third day they fought with exceeding strong lances; and they were filled with rage and fought furiously even until noon. And at last they gave each other such a shock that the girths of their horses were broken, so that they fell over their horses' cruppers to the ground. Rising up speedily they drew their swords, and resumed the combat on foot. And all they that witnessed the encounter felt assured that they had never before seen two men so valiant or so powerful. And so

strong were their strokes that had it been midnight it would have been light from the fire that flashed from their weapons.

Now as they fought the knight gave Gawaine a blow that turned his helmet from off his face, so that the knight saw that it was Gawaine. Then Owain said, for the knight was Sir Owain:

"My lord, Gawaine, I did not know thee for my cousin, owing to the robe of honor that enveloped thee; take my sword and my arms."

But Gawaine replied, "Thou art the victor, brave Owain; take thou my sword."

With that King Arthur saw that they were conversing, and advanced toward them. And Gawaine said,

"My lord, King Arthur, here is Owain who has vanquished me and will not take my arms."

To this Owain replied, "My lord, it is he that hath vanquished me, and he will not take my sword."

"Give me your swords," said King Arthur, "and then neither of you has vanquished the other."

At this Owain put his arms around King Arthur's neck, and they embraced; and all the host hurried forward to see Owain, and to embrace him. And there was nigh being a loss of life, so great was the press.

On the morrow King Arthur made ready to depart; but Owain said, "My lord, this is not well for

thee, for I have been absent from thee these three years, and during all that time I have been preparing a banquet for thee, knowing that thou wouldst come to seek me. Tarry with me therefore until both you and your attendants have recovered from the journey, and have been anointed."

So they all proceeded to the castle of the Countess of the Fountain, and the banquet that had been three years preparing was consumed in three months. Never had there been a more delicious or more agreeable banquet. And when King Arthur was ready to depart, he sent an embassy to the Countess to beseech her to permit Owain to go with him, for the space of three months, that he might show him to the nobles and fair dames of the Island of Britain. And the Countess gave her consent, though it was very painful to her. So Owain came to the Island of Britain. And when he was once more with his kindred and friends, he remained with them three years instead of three months.

Now one day as Owain sat at meat, in the palace of the king at Caerleon, there came a damsel riding into the hall upon a bay horse with a curling mane, and covered with foam; and the bridle and as much as was seen of the saddle was of gold. The damsel was richly arrayed in a robe of yellow satin. As they all looked upon her surprised, she

came up to Owain, and took the ring from off his hand, saying,

"Thus shall be treated the deceiver, the traitor, the faithless, the disgraced, and the beardless." Then she turned her horse's head and departed.

At this Owain suddenly remembered the Countess and how he had deserted her; and his mind was so filled with shame and sorrow that he well nigh lost his reason. The next day he did not go to court, nor did he return to the Countess, but wandered into wild and desert places, and there remained until his apparel was worn out, and his hair and beard grew long, and his body was sore wasted. And he went about with the wild beasts and fed them until they learned to know him and became familiar with him. But at length he became so weak that he could no longer bear their company. Then he descended from the mountains to the valley and came to a park that was the fairest in the world, and belonged to the Countess whom he had deserted. And he was so weak that he lay down by a small lake and soon became insensible.

One day the Countess came forth with her maidens to walk by the lake that was in the middle of the park. As they came near the lake they saw the form of a man lying as if dead; and they were terrified. At length they went near him and touched him, and saw there was life in him, though

he was unconscious. The Countess returned to the castle and took a flask full of precious ointment, and gave it to one of her handmaidens, saying, "Go with this, and take with thee yonder horse and clothing, and place them near the man we saw just now; and anoint him with this balsam near his heart; and if there is life in him he will revive. Then watch what he will do."

The maiden obeyed and went and poured the balsam upon Owain, and left the horse and the garments hard by, and then went a little way off, and hid herself to watch him. In a short time she saw him begin to move; and he rose up and looked at his person, and became ashamed at the unseemliness of his appearance. So he clothed himself with the garments that were near him, and with difficulty mounted the horse.

Then the damsel came forward and saluted him, and he asked her, "What land is this?"

"Truly," she said, "it belongs to a widowed Countess. At the death of her husband she had two earldoms, but now this park and castle are all that are left to her, the rest having been taken away from her by a young earl, her neighbor, because she refused to become his wife."

"That is a pity," said Owain.

Then the maiden led him to the castle, and took him to a pleasant chamber, and kindled a fire and

left him. The maiden then came to the Countess, and gave the flask into her hand.

"Ha, maiden," said the Countess, "where is all the balsam?"

"Have I not used it all?" answered the maiden.

"Oh, maiden!" said the Countess, "I cannot easily forgive thee this. It is sad for me to have wasted full seven pounds of precious ointment upon a stranger whom I know not. However, maiden, wait thou upon him until he is quite recovered."

The maiden did as she was bidden and furnished him with meat and drink and fire and lodging and medicine until he was well again. And in three months he was restored to his former guise, and became even more comely than he had ever been before.

One day Owain heard a great tumult and a sound of arms in the castle, and he inquired of the maiden the cause thereof. "The Earl," said she, "whom I mentioned to thee, has come before the castle with a numerous army, to subdue the Countess."

Hearing this, Owain inquired of her whether the Countess had a horse and arms in her possession. "She has the best in the world," said the maiden.

"Wilt thou go and request of her the loan of a horse and arms for me," said Owain, "that I may go and look at this army?"

"I will," replied the maiden, "willingly."

So she came to the Countess and told her what Owain had said. And the Countess laughed. "Truly," she said, "I will give him a horse and arms forever—such a horse and such arms as he never had before. And I am glad that they should be taken by him to-day, lest my enemies should have them against my will to-morrow. Yet I know not what he will do with them."

Then the Countess bade them bring out a beautiful black steed upon which was a beechen saddle, and a suit of armor for man and horse. Then Owain armed himself and mounted the horse, and went forth attended by two pages completely equipped with horses and arms. When he came near to the earl's army he could see neither its extent nor its extremity, so large it was.

Then said Owain to the pages, "In which troop is the earl?"

"In yonder troop," they said, "in which are four yellow standards; two of them are before and two of them are behind him."

"Now," said Owain, "do you return, and await me near the portal of the castle."

So they returned and Owain pressed forward until he met the earl. And Owain fell upon him, and dragged him out of the saddle, and carried him off, in spite of all the efforts of his knights, to the castle. And Owain took him to the Countess, and

threw him down before her saying, "Behold, here is a gift of requital for thy precious balsam."

Finding himself thus a prisoner in the castle, the earl, as a ransom for his life, restored to the Countess the two earldoms that he had taken from her; and for his freedom he gave her half of his own dominions, and all his gold and his silver and his jewels, besides hostages.

And after this Owain made ready to take his departure; and though the Countess and all her subjects besought him to remain, he chose rather to wander through distant lands and deserts.

## CHAPTER IV

### OWAIN AGAIN FINDS THE COUNTESS

AS Owain rode he heard a loud yelling in a wood, which was repeated a second and a third time. Going towards the spot whence the sound proceeded he came to a huge craggy mound in the middle of the wood, on the side of which was a gray rock. There was a deep cleft in the rock, and a serpent lay within the cleft. And near the rock stood a black lion; and every time the lion sought to go thence the serpent darted towards him to attack him.

As Owain looked upon the scene, he unsheathed his sword and drew near the rock; and, as the serpent sprang out to attack him, he struck it with his sword and cut it in two. Then he dried his sword and went on his way as before. And, behold, the lion followed him and played about him as though it had been a greyhound that he had reared.

Thus they journeyed on together until evening. And when it was time for Owain to take his repast, he dismounted and turned his horse loose to graze on a flat and wooded meadow. And he kindled a

fire, and the lion brought him fuel enough to last for three nights. Then the lion disappeared; but presently returned with a large roebuck which he threw down before Owain. Being hungry Owain roasted some of the flesh of the roebuck for himself, and the rest of it he gave to the lion.

While he was eating, he heard a deep sigh that seemed to come from within a rock near at hand. Going near the rock and seeing no one he called out to know who it was that groaned so piteously. A voice answered,

"I am Luned, the handmaiden of the Countess of the Fountain. I am imprisoned here on account of the knight that came from King Arthur's court and married the Countess. He was the friend I loved most in the world; and after he had departed, two of the knights of the court traduced him, and called him a deceiver. And because I said that I would vouch for him that he would come before long and maintain his cause against both of them, they imprisoned me in this cave, and said that I should be put to death, unless he came to deliver me by a certain day. That day is no further off than to-morrow; and I have no one to send to seek him for me. His name is Owain, the son of Urien."

"Art thou certain that if the knight knew all this, he would come to thy rescue?" asked Owain.

"I am most certain of it," she replied.

Then Owain divided the supper he was eating into two parts, one for himself and the other for the maiden, and then laid himself down to sleep; and never did sentinel keep stricter watch over his lord than did the lion that night over Owain.

In the morning Owain asked the damsel if there were any places near where he could get lodging; so she directed him to an earl's castle. "Cross over yonder and go along the river side, and in a short time thou wilt see a great castle, with many towers. The earl who owns the castle is the most hospitable man in the world. There thou mayst spend the night."

So Owain mounted his horse and passed across by the ford, and soon came in sight of the castle. And he entered it and was well received by the earl and his people. The lion went with him and lay down in the horse's manger, so that none of the people of the castle dared to approach him.

Soon they went to meat; and the earl sat upon one side of Owain, and on the other side sat his only daughter. And Owain thought he had never seen any maiden more lovely than she. Then the lion came and placed himself between Owain's feet, and he fed him with every kind of food that he took himself. And as he conversed with the earl he thought he never saw anything equal to the sadness of the people.

In the middle of the repast the earl began to bid

Owain welcome. Then said Owain, "Behold, it is time for thee to be cheerful."

"Heaven knows," said the earl, "that it is not thy coming that makes us sorrowful; but we have cause enough for sadness and care."

"What is the cause of this sadness?" said Owain.

"I have two sons," said the earl, "and yesterday they went to the mountains to hunt. Now there is on the mountain a monster who kills men and devours them; and he seized my sons. And to-morrow is the time he has fixed to be here and he threatens that he will slay my sons before my eyes unless I will deliver into his hands my daughter."

"Truly," said Owain, "that is very sad. But what wilt thou do?"

"Heaven knows," said the earl, "it will be better that my sons should be slain against my will than that I should give up my daughter to him to ill-treat and destroy."

After which they talked about many other things until it was time to retire; and Owain remained in the castle over night. As he thought upon what the earl had told him he resolved that he would meet the giant and deliver the two youths and thus save the maiden from her ill fate.

Early the next morning there was a great clamor, caused by the coming of the giant with the two youths. Awakened by the noise, Owain arose and after the morning meal, put on his armor, and

went forth to encounter the giant; and his lion went with him. When the giant saw that Owain was armed, he rushed fiercely upon him; upon which the lion sprang upon the giant and fought against him even more strongly than Owain did.

"Truly," said the giant, "I could deal easily with thee were it not for this lion that is with thee."

Upon that Owain took the lion back to the castle, and shut the gate upon him, and then returned to fight the giant as before. The lion roared furiously, and climbed up till he got to the top of the castle, and then sprang down from the wall, and rushed again upon the giant, giving him a stroke with his paw that tore him from the shoulder to the hip, so that he fell down dead. Then Owain took the two youths and restored them to their father.

The earl, full of gratitude for the rescue of his sons, besought Owain to remain with him, but he would not wait; and set forth immediately to the place where Luned was imprisoned in the stone vault. When he came there he found a great fire kindled; and two youths with curly locks were leading the maiden to cast her into the fire. Owain asked them what charge they had against her. And they told him of the compact that was between them, as the maiden had done the night before.

"Owain," they said, "has failed her, and now we are taking her to be burnt."

"Truly," said Owain, "he is a good knight, and if he knew that the maiden was in such peril, I marvel that he came not to her rescue. But if you will accept me in his stead, I will do battle with you."

"That we will," replied the youth, "most willingly, for thou seemest to be a goodly knight."

Then they rushed upon Owain, and he was hard beset by them. And with that the lion came to Owain's assistance, and they two got the better of the young men. When they saw they were being worsted in the fight, they said to him, "Chieftain, it was not agreed that we should fight save with thyself alone, and it is harder for us to contend with yonder animal than with thee."

At this Owain took the lion and put him in the place where Luned had been imprisoned, and blocked up the door with stones; and then went to fight with the young men as before. But Owain had not his usual strength, and the young men pressed hard upon him and would have slain him. As they thus fought the lion roared incessantly at seeing Owain in trouble, and he pressed against the wall until he found a way out, and rushed upon the young men and instantly slew them. So Luned was saved from being burned to death.

Then Owain took Luned from the cave and returned with her to the castle of the Lady of the Fountain. And when the lady saw him she recog-

nized him as her lord, and she rushed into his arms, and each embraced the other, so glad were they to meet again. Owain told her of all his adventures and begged her to forgive him for his long absence, and this she readily consented to do. And when Owain again went thence to visit King Arthur's court, he took the Countess with him, and there they lived for many years in great happiness and renown.

And this is the tale of the Lady of the Fountain.

This is a tale of knightly deeds very similar to those of the Knights of King Arthur, though a little more extravagant than any which Malory relates. Several of the characters are the same as in Malory's book, with the same personal characteristics, all indicating a common origin of these stories with the Arthurian tales.

Lady Guest says that "Amongst all the characters of ancient British history, none is more interesting, or occupies a more conspicuous place than (Owain) the hero of this tale." She also says that "The story of Owain and the Lady of the Fountain was very popular in the days of Chivalry, and we meet it in many European languages besides the Welsh."

# Kilwch and Olwen

## Chapter I

### How Kilwch sought Olwen for his wife

ALONG time ago in Wales there was a youth named Kilwch. His mother had died when he was a boy, and in time his father married again, and his step-mother having children of her own had not given him the love of a mother. As he grew older he was very handsome and his step-mother was jealous of his beauty and longed to get rid of him. One day she went to him and said, "It is time for thee to be thinking about a wife, and it has been revealed to me that thou never wilt be suited with a wife until thou obtain Olwen, the daughter of Yspaddaden Penkawr."

At this the youth blushed, for he had never thought about having a wife. But as he dwelt upon the matter his heart grew warm and the love of the maiden diffused itself through all his frame, although he had never seen her nor heard of her before. His father noticing the change in his spirits, said, "What has come over thee, my son, and what is it that aileth thee?"

"My step-mother," he replied, "has declared to me that it is time for me to have a wife, and that I shall never have one until I obtain Olwen, the daughter of Yspaddaden Penkawr."

"That will be easy for thee," answered his father. "King Arthur is thy cousin and will aid thee in the matter; go, therefore, unto Arthur and have him cut thy hair and then ask this of him as a boon."

So the youth took a steed, firm of limb, with head of dappled gray and shell formed hoofs, having a bridle of linked gold on his head and a saddle of costly gold upon his back. In his hand he bore two spears of silver, sharp, well-tempered and headed with steel, and of an edge to wound even the wind and cause the blood to flow as soft as the fall of the dew-drops from the blades of reed-grass upon the earth when the dew of June is at the heaviest. A gold-hilted sword was upon his thigh, the blade of which was of gold, bearing a cross of inlaid gold of the hue of the lightning of heaven.

As he rode there went before him two brindled white-breasted greyhounds, having strong collars of rubies about their necks reaching from the shoulder to the ear. And the one that was on the left side kept bounding across to the right side, and the one one the right side to the left, sporting thus around him like two sea swallows. His courser was so proud of step that he cast up four sods with his four hoofs, which like four swallows in the air

flew about his head. About him was a four-cornered cloth of purple with an apple of gold at each corner, and every one of the apples was of the value of an hundred kine. And there was precious gold of the value of three hundred kine upon his shoes, and upon his stirrups and from his knee to the tip of his toe. And so light at times was his courser's tread that the blades of grass bent not beneath him, as he journeyed towards the gate of King Arthur's palace.

When the youth reached King Arthur's palace he inquired at the gate of the palace of a man who stood there, saying, "Is there a porter here?"

"There is," said the man; "and if thou holdest not thy peace, small will be thy welcome. I am Arthur's porter every first day of January; and during every other day of the year the office is filled by others, one of whom goes upon his head to save his feet, like a rolling stone upon the floor of the court.

"Open the portal, then, if thou art the porter," said Kilwch.

"I will not open it," replied the porter.

"Wherefore wilt thou not?" inquired the youth.

"The knife is in the meat, and the drink is in the horn, and there is revelry in Arthur's hall; and none may enter therein, but the son of a king of a privileged country, or a craftsman bringing his craft."

To this the youth replied, "That will I not do

for I am no craftsman. If thou openest the gate, it is well, but if thou dost not open it, I will bring disgrace upon thy lord and evil report upon thee. And I will set up three shouts at this very gate, than which none were ever more deadly."

"What clamor soever thou mayest make," said the porter, "against the laws of King Arthur's palace, thou shalt not enter therein, until I first go and speak with him."

Then the porter went into the hall; and King Arthur said to him, "Hast thou any news from the gate?"

"Half of my life is past, and I have seen many noble sovereigns and many handsome men; but never did I behold a man of equal grace and dignity to him who is now at the portal of the gate."

Then said King Arthur, "If thou didst enter here walking, return thou running, and let him enter. It is unbecoming to keep such a man as thou sayest he is waiting at the gate in the wind and the rain."

Then up spake Kay, the King's chief counsellor, saying, "By the hand of my friend, if thou wouldst follow my counsel, thou wouldst not break through the laws of thy court because of him."

"Not so, blessed Kay," said King Arthur. "It is an honor to us to be resorted to; and the greater our courtesy the greater will be our renown, and our fame, and our glory."

Then the porter returned to the gate, and opened it, and the youth rode through with his horse, and

even into the hall where Arthur was. Stopping before the King he said with great courtesy, "Greeting be unto thee, sovereign ruler of this island; and be this greeting no less unto the lowest than unto the highest."

"Greeting unto thee, also," said King Arthur. "Sit thou between two of my warriors; and thou shalt have minstrels before thee, and thou shalt enjoy the privilege of a king born to a throne, as long as thou remainest here."

"I came not here to consume meat and drink," said the youth, "but, if I obtain the boon that I seek, I will requite it to thee and extol thee. And if I have it not, I will bear forth thy dispraise to the four quarters of the world, even as far as thy renown has extended."

At this King Arthur said, "Since thou wilt not remain here, chieftain, thou shalt receive the boon whatsoever thy tongue may name; save only my ship, or my mantle, or my sword, or my lance, or my shield, or my dagger, or my wife. Besides these, name what thou wilt."

"I would," the youth replied, "that first thou bless my hair."

"That will I gladly do," said King Arthur.

So Arthur took a golden comb and scissors whose loops were made of silver, and he combed and cut the youth's hair. Then King Arthur inquired of him who he was. "For," he said, "my heart warms unto thee, and I know that thou art

come of my blood. Tell me, therefore, who thou art."

"I will tell thee," said the youth, "I am Kilwch, the son of Kilydd, the son of Prince Kelyddon and Goleuddydd, the daughter of Prince Anlawdd."

"That is true," said King Arthur. "Thou art my cousin and my heart goes out to thee in friendship. Whatsoever boon thou mayst ask, thou shalt receive, be it what it may that thy tongue shall name."

"I crave of thee, then," the youth replied, "that thou obtain for me Olwen, the daughter of Penkawr for my wife, and this boon I would seek at the hands of thy warriors."

Then said King Arthur, "O chieftain! I have never heard of the maiden of whom thou speakest, nor of her kindred; but I will gladly send messengers in search of her. Give me time to seek her."

"I will willingly grant thee from this night to that of the end of the year for you to do so," the youth replied.

Then King Arthur sent messengers to every land within his dominions to seek for the maiden; and at the end of the year the messengers returned without having gained any knowledge or intelligence concerning Olwen, more than on the first day.

When they told Kilwch of this he said, "Every

one has received his boon, and yet I lack mine. I will depart and bear away thy honor with me!"

At this Kay spoke up quickly, saying, "Rash chieftain! dost thou reproach King Arthur? Go with us, and we shall not part until thou dost confess that the maiden exists not in the world, or until we obtain her." Thereupon Kay rose up and made ready to go in search of the maiden Olwen.

Now Kay was one of the most wonderful warriors in the world. He had this peculiarity, that his breath would last nine days and nine nights under water, and he could exist nine days and nine nights without sleep or food. Also a wound from Kay's sword no physician could heal, so that every one who was wounded by it died. When it pleased him he could render himself as tall as the highest tree in the forest. And so great was the heat of his body that when it rained the hardest, whatever he carried remained dry for a hand breath above and a hand breath below his hand; and when his companions were coldest this heat was to them as fuel with which to light their fire.

As they thus made ready for their journey King Arthur called Bedwyr, who never shrank from any enterprise upon which Kay was bound. None was equal to him in swiftness throughout the island, except King Arthur himself and a knight called Drych Ail Kibddar. And although he had but a single hand, three warriors could not shed blood faster on the field of battle than he. And besides

this, his lance would produce a wound equal to those of nine opposing lances.

King Arthur also called to Kynddelig, the guide, saying, "Go thou upon this expedition with the chieftain." For as good a guide was he in a land which he had never seen as he was in his own.

Besides him he called two other guides,—the one, a linguist, who knew all tongues that were spoken, the other a magician who could cast a charm and an illusion over people so that none might see them, whilst they could see every one.

When all was ready they started and traveled until they came to a vast, open plain, and in this plain they saw a great castle, which seemed to them the fairest of all the castles in the world. They journeyed that day until the evening; and when they thought they were nigh to the castle, they were seemingly no nearer to it than they had been in the morning. And the second and the third day they journeyed, and at length they found themselves drawing near to the castle.

When they came to the castle, they beheld a vast flock of sheep, which so far as they could see was boundless and without end. And upon the top of a high mound there was an herdsman keeping the sheep. He was clothed with a rug made of skins and by his side was a shaggy mastiff, larger than a steed nine winters old. So faithful was this mastiff that never had the man lost a lamb from his flock, much less a large sheep. He was a

wicked man, however, and let no occasion pass without doing some hurt and harm. All the dead trees and bushes in the plain he burnt with his breath down to the very ground.

As they stood looking at the man Kay said to one of the guides, "Go thou and salute yonder man."

But the guide replied, "Kay, I engaged to go no further than thou thyself."

"Let us then all go together," said Kay.

"Fear not," said the magician, "to go thither, for I will cast a spell upon the dog, so that he shall injure no one."

So they went up to the mound whereon the herdsman sat, and they said to him, "Whose are the sheep that thou dost keep? And to whom does yonder castle belong?"

"Stupid are ye, truly," the man replied. "For through the whole world is it known that this is the castle of Yspaddaden Penkawr."

"And who art thou?" they asked him.

"I am called Custennin, the son of Dyfnedig; and my brother Yspaddaden Penkawr opposed me because of my possessions and hath taken them from me. And ye, also, who are ye?"

"We are an embassy from King Arthur, come to seek Olwen, the daughter of Yspaddaden Penhawr."

"O! men!" the man exclaimed, "the mercy of heaven be upon you! Do not that for all the

world; for none who ever came hither on this quest has returned alive."

So saying the herdsman rose up, and as he did so Kilwch gave unto him a ring of gold. As he sought to put on the ring, he found it was too small for him, so he placed it on the finger of his glove. Then he went home, and gave the glove to his spouse to keep. Taking the ring from the glove she said:

"Whence came this ring? For thou art not wont to have good fortune like this."

"I went," said he, "to the sea to seek for fish, and, lo, I saw a dead body borne upon the waves. And a fairer corpse than it did I never behold. And from its finger did I take this ring."

"O man!" said she, "does the sea permit its dead to wear jewels? Show me, then, this body."

"O wife!" he answered, "forgive me for what I have just said; but indeed him to whom this ring belonged thou shalt see here in the evening."

"And who is he?" asked the woman.

"Kilwch, the son of Kilydd, who has come to seek Olwen for his wife."

When she heard that, her feelings were divided between the joy that she had that her nephew, the son of her sister, was coming to her, and sorrow, because she had never known any one to depart alive who had come on that quest.

Meanwhile Kilwch and his companions rode forward to the gate of Custennin, the herdsman's

dwelling. And, when she heard their footsteps approaching, she ran out with joy to greet them.

And when she met them she sought to throw her arms about their necks. But Kay snatched a billet out of a pile of wood and placed it between her two hands, and so strong was she that she squeezed it so hard that it became a twisted coil.

"Oh, woman!" said Kay, "if thou hadst squeezed me thus none could ever again have set their affections on me. Such tokens of thy love would do thy friends much harm."

Then they entered into the house, and were served with meat and wine, and after that they all went forth to amuse themselves. As they all sat feasting the woman opened a stone chest that was before the chimney corner, and out of it arose a youth with yellow curling hair. At this they were all amazed and one of them said, "It is a pity to keep this youth shut up in a chest. I am sure it is not his own crime that is visited upon him."

"This is but a remnant of my children," said the woman. "Three and twenty of my sons has Yspaddaden Penkawr slain, and I have no more hope of this one than of the others and thus I conceal him in this chest."

Then Kay said, "Let him come to be a companion with me, and he shall not be slain unless I also am slain with him." To this she agreed, and the young man became the companion of Kay.

After the meal was over the woman asked them, saying, "Upon what errand came you here?"

"We came to seek Olwen for this youth," they replied.

"Then," said the woman, "in the name of Heaven, since no one of this castle hath yet seen you, return again whence you came."

"Heaven is our witness that we shall not return until we have seen the maiden," they replied.

"Does she ever come hither," inquired Kay, "so that she may be seen?"

"She comes here every Saturday to wash her head; and in the vessel where she washes, she leaves all her rings, and she never either comes herself, or sends any messengers, to fetch them."

"Will she come here if she is sent for?" inquired Kay.

"Heaven knows that I will not destroy my soul, nor will I betray those that trust me. Unless you will pledge me your faith that you will not harm her, I will not send for her."

"We pledge it," they said.

So a message was sent; and the maiden soon came before them. She was clothed in a robe of flame-colored silk, and about her neck was a collar of ruddy gold, on which were precious emeralds and rubies. More yellow was her head than the flower of the broom; and her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave; and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the wood-

anemone amidst the spray of the meadow-fountain. The eye of the trained hawk, or the glance of the three-mewed falcon, was not brighter than hers. Her bosom was more snowy than the breast of the white swan; her cheek was redder than the reddest roses; and who so beheld her was filled with love for her. Four white trefoils sprung up wherever she trod; and therefore she was called Olwen.

As she entered the house she stood a moment looking at the assembly, and then she went and took a seat beside Kilwch, upon the foremost bench. As soon as he looked upon her he knew her, and he said:

"Ah, maiden! thou art she whom I have loved; and many a day have I loved thee; come away with me and be my bride lest they speak evil of thee and of me."

"I cannot do this," she replied, "however much I might like it, for I have pledged my father not to go with any one without his counsel, for it has been said that his life will last only until the time of my espousals. Whatever is must be, but I will give thee this advice, if thou wilt take it. Go ask me of my father, and what he shall require of thee, grant it, and thou wilt obtain me. But if thou deny him anything, thou wilt not obtain me, and it will be well for thee if thou escape with thy life."

"All this I promise," said Kilwch, "if the occasion offers."

Then she bade them adieu and started to her chamber, and they all rose up and followed her into the castle. And they slew the nine porters that were at the nine gates, in silence. And they slew the nine watch-dogs, without one of them barking. And they went forward to the hall, and there they saw the King Yspaddaden Penhawr.

"The greeting of Heaven and of man be unto thee, Yspaddaden Penhawr," said they.

"And you—wherefore come you?" said the king, in a stern voice.

"We come to ask thy daughter Olwen for Kilwch, the son of Kilydd, the son of Kelyddon," they replied.

"Where are my pages and my servants?" said the King. "Raise up my two eyebrows which have fallen over my eyes, that I may see the fashion of my son-in-law." And they did so.

And when he had looked upon him for awhile he said, "Come hither to-morrow, and you shall have my answer."

Then they rose up to go forth, and as they went the king seized one of the three poisoned darts that lay beside him, and threw it after them. And Bedwyr caught it in his hand, and flung it back, and pierced the king with it through the knee.

At this he cried, "A cursed ungentle son-in-law, truly! I shall ever walk the worse for his rudeness, and shall ever be without a cure. This poisoned iron pains me like the bite of a gad-fly.

Cursed be the smith who forged it, and the anvil whereon it was wrought!"

Then they withdrew from the castle, and that night they took up their abode in the home of Custennin the herdsman. The next day, with the dawn, they arrayed themselves with haste, and proceeded again to the castle, and as they entered the hall they said:

"Yspaddaden Penkawr, give us thy daughter in consideration of her dower and her maiden fee, which we will pay to thee and to her two kinswomen likewise. And unless thou wilt do so thou shalt meet with thy death on her account."

To this he replied, "Her four great-grandmothers and her four great-grandsires are yet alive; and it is needful that I take counsel with them."

"Be it so," they answered. "We will go to meat."

As they rose up to go he took the second dart that was beside him, and cast it after them. And Menw, the son of Gwaedd caught it, and flung it back at him, and struck him in the centre of the breast, so that it came out at the small of his back.

"A cursed ungentle son-in-law, truly!" said he. "The hard iron pains me like the bite of a horse-leech. Cursed be the hearth whereon it was heated, and the smith who forged it! Henceforth, whenever I go up a hill, I shall have a shortness

in my breath and a pain in my chest, and I shall often loathe my food."

So they left him and went to their own lodgings and spent the day in feasting and in pleasant games and sports.

The third day they returned again to the palace. And Yspaddaden Penkawr said to them, "Shoot not at me again, unless you desire death. Where are my attendants? Lift up the forks of my eyebrows, which have fallen over my eyeballs, that I may see the fashion of my son-in-law."

Then after he had denied them again they arose to depart; and, as they did so, Yspaddaden Penkawr took the third poisoned dart, and cast it at them. And Kilwch caught it, and threw it back vigorously, and wounded him through the eyeball so that the dart came out at the back of his head.

"A cursed ungentle son-in-law, truly! As long as I remain alive, my eyesight will be the worse. Whenever I go against the wind, my eyes will water, and peradventure my head will burn, and I shall have a giddiness every new moon. Cursed be the fire in which the dart was forged! Like the bite of a mad dog is the stroke of this poisoned iron."

And again they withdrew and spent the day in feasting and in pastimes and in pleasant sports.

On the next day they came to the palace once more, and they said to Yspaddaden, "Shoot not at us any more, unless thou desirest such hurt and

harm and torture as thou now hast, and even more. Give us thy daughter, and if thou wilt not give her, thou shalt receive thy death because of her."

"Where is he that seeks my daughter?" said Penkawr. "Come hither, where I may see thee." And they placed him in a chair face to face with him.

As Yspaddaden Penkawr looked upon him he said, "Is it thou that seekest my daughter?"

"It is I," answered Kilwch.

"I must have thy pledge that thou wilt not do towards me otherwise than is just, and when I have gotten that which I shall name, my daughter thou shalt have."

"I promise thee willingly," said Kilwch. "Name what thou wilt."

"I will do so," said he. "Seest thou yonder red-tilled ground?"

"I see it," answered Kilwch.

"When first I met the mother of this maiden, nine bushels of flax were sown therein and none has yet sprung up, neither white nor black. I require of thee to have the flax to sow in the new land yonder, that when it grows up it may make a white wimple for my daughter's head on the day of thy wedding."

"It will be easy for me to compass this, although thou mayst think that it will not be easy," answered Kilwch.

"Though thou get this, there is yet that which

thou wilt not get,—the harp of Teirtu, to play to us that night. When a man desires that it should play, it does so itself; and when he desires that it should cease it ceases. And this he will not give thee of his own free will, and thou wilt not be able to compel him."

"It will be easy for me to compass this, although thou mayest think that it will not be easy," said Kilwch.

"Though thou get this, there is yet that which thou wilt not get. I require thee to get for me my huntsman Mabon, the son of Modron. He was taken from his mother when three nights old, and it is not known where he now is, nor whether he is living or dead."

"It will be easy for me to compass this, although thou mayest think it will not be easy," said Kilwch.

"Though thou get him, there is that which thou wilt not get,—the two cubs of the wolf, Gast Rhymhi; no leash in the world will hold them, but a leash made from the beard of Dissull Varvawc, the robber. And the leash will be of no avail unless it be plucked from his beard while he is alive, and twitched out with wooden tweezers. While he lives he will not suffer it to be done to him, and the leash will be of no use should he be dead, because it will be brittle."

"It will be easy for me to compass this, although

thou mayest think it will not be easy," replied Kilwch.

"When thou get this, there is that yet which thou wilt not get,—the sword of Gwrnach the Giant; of his own free will he will not give it, either for a price or as a gift; and thou wilt never be able to compel him."

"It will be easy for me to compass this, although thou mayest think that it will not be easy," said Kilwch.

"Though thou get this, there is yet that which thou wilt not get. Difficulties shalt thou meet with, and nights without sleep, in seeking this, and, if thou obtain it not, neither shalt thou obtain my daughter."

To this Kilwch answered, "Horses shall I have and brave men to aid me, and my lord and kinsman Arthur will obtain for me all these things. And I shall gain thy daughter, and thou shalt lose thy life."

"Go forward then and thou shalt be chargeable for food and raiment for my daughter whilst thou art seeking these things; and when thou hast compassed all these marvels, thou shalt have my daughter for thy wife."

Thereupon they left the castle of Penkawr and started on their way to achieve the tasks that had been set before Kilwch, seeking first to find the sword of Gwrnach the Giant.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW KILWCH WON OLWEN FOR HIS WIFE

ALL that day they journeyed, and as the sun was sinking behind the hills they beheld a castle, which was the largest in the world. And lo, a black man, huger than any three of the men of the world, came out of the castle.

As he came near they spake unto him saying, "Whence comest thou, O man?"

"From the castle you see yonder," the black man replied.

"Whose castle is that?" they asked.

"Stupid are ye, truly, O men," he answered. "There is no one in the world that does not know to whom this castle belongs. It is the castle of Gwrnach, the giant."

"What treatment is there for guests and strangers that alight at that castle?" inquired Kilwch.

"O chieftain," the black man replied, "Heaven protect thee! No guest ever returned thence alive, and no one may enter therein, unless he brings with him his craft."

Hearing this they proceeded toward the gate;

and Gwrhyr Gwalstawd asked, "Is there a porter at the gate?"

"There is," the man replied, "but wherefore dost thou inquire?"

"Open the gate," demanded one of Kilwch's men.

"I will not open it," the porter replied.

"Wherefore wilt thou not open it?" asked Kilwch.

"The knife is in the meat, and the drink is in the horn, and there is revelry in the hall of Gwrnach the Giant, and except for a craftsman who brings his craft the gate will not be opened to-night."

"Verily, porter," said Kay, "I may enter, for my craft bring I with me."

"What is thy craft?" the porter inquired.

"The best burnisher of swords am I in the world," said Kay.

"I will go and tell this unto Gwrnach the Giant, and I will bring thee an answer."

So the porter went in, and Gwrnach said to him, "Hast thou any news from the gate?"

"I have," replied the porter. "There is a party at the door of the gate who desire to come in."

"Didst thou inquire of them if they possessed any art?"

"I did inquire," said he, "and one told me he was well skilled in the burnishing of swords."

"We have need of him, then," said the Giant. "For some time have I sought for some one to

polish my sword, and could find no one. Let this man enter, since he brings with him his craft."

Thereupon the porter returned and opened the gate. And Kay went in by himself, and he saluted Gwrnach the Giant. And a chair was placed for him opposite to Gwrnach. And Gwrnach said to him, "O man! is it true that is reported of thee,—that thou knowest how to burnish swords?"

"I know full well how to do so," answered Kay.

Then Gwrnach commanded that his sword be brought to him. And Kay took a blue whetstone from under his arm, and asked him whether he would have it burnished white or blue."

"Do with it as it seems good to thee, and as thou wouldst if it were thine own," the Giant answered.

Then Kay polished one-half of the blade, and put it in his hand. "Will this please thee?" he asked.

"I would rather than all that is in my dominions that the whole of it were like unto this," he answered. "But it is a marvel to me that such a man as thou should be without a companion."

"O noble sir," Kay replied, "I have a companion, albeit he is not skilled in this art."

"Who may he be?" inquired Gwrnach.

"Let the porter go forth, and I will tell him whereby he may know him. The head of his lance will leave its shaft, and draw blood from the wind, and will descend upon its shaft again."

Then the porter went to the gate and opened it, and Bedwyr entered. And Kay said, "Bedwyr is very skillful, although he knows not this art."

And there was much discourse among those who were without because that Kay and Bedwyr had gone in. And a young man who was with him, the only son of Custennin, the herdsman, got in also. And he contrived to admit all the rest, though they kept themselves concealed.

The sword was now polished, and Kay gave it into the hands of Gwrnach, the Giant, to see if he were pleased with the work. And the Giant said, "The work is good; I am content therewith."

"It is thy scabbard that hath rusted thy sword," said Kay. "Give it to me, that I may take out the wooden sides of it, and put in new ones."

So saying he took the scabbard from him, and the sword in the other hand. And he came and stood over the Giant, as if he would have put the sword into the scabbard; and with it he cut off the head of the Giant at one blow. Then they despoiled the castle, and took from it what goods and jewels they would. And again on the same day, at the beginning of the year, they came to Arthur's court, bearing with them the sword of Gwrnach the Giant. Thus they achieved the first of their tasks.

Now when they told King Arthur how they had sped, he said, "It is a good beginning."

Then they took counsel together and said,

"Which of these marvels will it be best to seek next?"

"It will be best," said one, "to seek Mabon, the son of Modron; and he will not be found, unless we first find Eidoel, the son of Aer, his kinsman."

Then King Arthur rose up, and the warriors of the Island of Britain with him, to seek for Eidoel, and they proceeded until they came before the Castle of Glivi, where Eiodel was imprisoned.

Glivi stood on the summit of his castle, and as he saw Arthur and his men, he said, "King Arthur, what requirest thou of me, since nothing remains to me in this fortress, and I have neither joy nor pleasure in it, neither wheat nor oats? Seek not therefore to do me harm."

And King Arthur answered, "Not to injure thee came I hither, but to seek for the prisoner that is with thee."

"I will give thee my prisoner, though I had not thought to give him up to any one, and therewith shalt thou have my support and my aid."

At this his followers said unto King Arthur, "Lord, go thou home; thou canst not proceed with thy host in quest of such small adventures as these."

Then said King Arthur, "It were well for thee, Gwrhyr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd, to go upon this quest; for thou knowest all languages, and art familiar with those of birds and beasts. And thou, Eidoel, oughtest likewise to go with the men in

search of thy cousin. As for you, Kay and Bedwyr, I have hope of whatever adventure ye are in quest of, that ye will achieve it. Achieve ye this adventure for me." So saying King Arthur left them and returned to his castle.

Then they went forward until they came to the place where the Ousel of Cilgwri dwelt. And Gwrhyr adjured her for the sake of Heaven, saying, "Tell me if thou knowest aught of Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken when three nights old from between his mother and the wall."

And the Ousel answered, "When I first came here, there was a smith's anvil in this place, and I was then a young bird. And from that time no work has been done upon it, save the pecking of my beak every evening; and now there is not so much as the size of a nut remaining thereof; yet during all that time I have never heard of the man for whom you inquire. Nevertheless, I will do that which is fitting that I should do for an embassy from Arthur. There is a race of animals who were formed before me, and I will be your guide to them."

So they proceeded to the place where was the Stag of Redynvre. "Stag of Redynvre," said the Ousel, "behold, we are come to thee, an embassy from King Arthur; for we have not heard of any animal older than thou. Say, knowest thou aught of Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken from his mother when three nights old?"

The Stag answered, "When first I came hither, there was a plain all around me, without any trees save one oak sapling, which grew up to be an oak with an hundred branches. And that oak has since perished; so that now nothing remains of it but the withered stump. And from that day to this I have been here; yet have I never heard of the man for whom you inquire. Nevertheless, being an embassy from Arthur, I will be your guide to the place where there is an animal which was formed before I was."

So they proceeded to the place where was the Owl of Cwm Cawlwyd. "Owl of Cwm Cawlwyd," said the Stag, "here is an embassy from King Arthur to ask thee if thou knowest aught of Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken from his mother when he was three nights old."

"If I knew, I would tell you," replied the Owl. "When first I came hither, the whole valley you see was a wooded glen. And a race of men came and rooted it up. And there grew there a second wood; and this wood is the third. My wings, are they not withered stumps? Yet all this time, even until to-day, I have never heard of the man for whom you inquire. Nevertheless, I will be the guide of Arthur's embassy until you come to the place where is the oldest animal in the world, and the one that has traveled most, the Eagle of Gwern Abwy."

When they reached the place where the Eagle

dwelt, the Owl said, "Eagle of Gwern Abwy, we have come to thee, an embassy from Arthur, to ask thee if thou knowest aught of Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken from his mother when he was three nights old?"

"If I knew I would tell you," said the Eagle. "I have been here for a great space of time, and when I first came hither there was a rock here from the top of which I peeped at the stars every evening; and it has crumbled away, and now it is not so much as a span high. All that time I have been here, and I have never heard of the man for whom you inquire, except once, when I went in search of food as far as Llyn Llyw. And when I came there I struck my talons into a salmon, thinking he would serve me as food for a long time. But he drew me into the water, and I was scarcely able to escape from him. After that I made peace with him; and I drew fifty fish spears out of his back, and relieved him. Unless he knows something of him whom you seek, I cannot tell who may. However, I will guide you to the place where he is."

So they went together; and when they reached the place where the salmon dwelt the Eagle said, "Salmon of Llyn Llyw, I have come to thee with an embassy from Arthur, to ask thee if thou knowest aught concerning Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken away when three nights old from his mother."

"As much as I know I will tell thee," the Salmon

answered. "With every tide I go along the river upwards until I come near to the walls of Gloucester, and there have I found such wrong as I never found elsewhere. And to the end that ye may give evidence thereto let one of you go hither upon each of my two shoulders."

So Kay and Gwrhyr Gwalstawd put themselves upon the two shoulders of the Salmon, and they proceeded until they came unto the wall of a prison; and there they heard a great wailing and lamenting from the dungeon.

And Gwrhyr called out in a loud voice saying, "Who is it that laments in this house of stone?"

"Alas!" replied the prisoner, "it is Mabon, the son of Modron, who is here imprisoned, and no imprisonment was ever so grievous as mine."

"Hast thou hope of being released for gold, or for silver, or for any gifts of wealth, or through battle and fighting?" they inquired.

"Only by fighting," he replied, "will whatever I may gain be obtained."

Then they went thence and returned to King Arthur, and they told him where Mabon, the son of Modron, was imprisoned, and that he could be delivered only by force of arms. So Arthur summoned the warriors of the island, and they journeyed as far as Gloucester to the place where Mabon was in prison. Kay and Redwyr were upon the shoulders of the fish, whilst the warriors of Arthur attacked the castle. And Kay broke

through the wall into the dungeon, and brought away the prisoner upon his back, whilst the fight was going on between the warriors. And King Arthur, having obtained the object of his search, returned home and Mabon with him now at liberty. Thus was achieved the capture of Mabon.

Then they set forth to achieve the task of the flax. Now on a certain day, as Gwyhyr Gwalstawd was walking over a mountain, he heard a wailing and a grievous cry. And when he heard it he sprang forward and went towards it. And when he came there, he saw a fire burning among the turf, and an ant hill nearly surrounded with fire. And he drew his sword, and smote off the ant hill close to the earth, so that it escaped being burned in the fire. And the ants said to him, "Receive for us the blessing of Heaven, and that which no man can give we will give thee."

Then they fetched the nine bushels of flax seed which Yspaddaden Penkawr had required of Kilwch, and they brought the full measure without lacking any, except one flax seed, and that a lame ant brought in before night.

Then said King Arthur, "Which of the marvels will it be best for us to seek next?"

"It will be best to seek for the two cubs of the wolf Gast Rhymhi," they said.

"Is it known," replied King Arthur, "where she is?"

They saw a great smoke which did not bend with the wind

"She is at the house of Tringad in Aber Deu Cleddyf," said one.

Then King Arthur went to the house of Tringad in Aber Deu Cleddyf, and he inquired of him whether he had heard of her there.

"She is in the form of a she-wolf with her two cubs, and has often slain my herds," Tringad replied, "and she is there below in a cave in Aber Cleddyf."

Then King Arthur went in his ship Prydwen, by sea, and the others went by land to hunt her. And they surrounded her and her two cubs, and took them, and carried them away. Thus they achieved the task of finding the two cubs of the wolf.

Then they started to find the robber out of whose beard they were to make a leash for the cubs. As they journeyed Kay and Bedwyr came to a beacon cairn on the summit of Plinlimmon, and there they found the highest wind that ever was in the world. As they looked around them they saw a great smoke towards the south afar off, which did not bend with the wind.

As they gazed upon the smoke Kay exclaimed, "By the hand of my friend, behold, yonder is the fire of a robber!"

Then they arose and hastened toward the smoke, and they came so near it that they could see Dillus Varvawc scorching a wild boar.

"Behold, yonder is the greatest robber that ever

fled from King Arthur," said Bedwyr unto Kay. "Dost thou know him?"

"I do know him," answered Kay. "He is Dillus Varvawc, and no leash in the world will be able to hold the cubs of Gast Rhymhi, save a leash made from the beard of him thou seest yonder. And even that will be useless unless his beard be plucked out alive, with wooden tweezers, for if dead it will be brittle."

"What thinkest thou that we should do concerning this?" said Bedwyr.

"Let us suffer him," said Kay, "to eat as much as he will of the meat, and after that he will fall asleep."

So during the time he was eating they employed themselves in making the wooden tweezers. And when Kay knew certainly that he was asleep he made a pit under his feet, and then he struck him a violent blow, and squeezed him into the pit. And there they twitched out his beard completely with the wooden tweezers, and after that they slew him altogether. And from thence they went, and took the leash made of the robber's beard, and they gave it into King Arthur's hand.

Thus they accomplished all the marvels that Yspaddaden Penkawr had required of Kilwch; and they set forward and took all these marvels to his court. When they came to the castle, Kilwch said to Yspaddaden Penkawr.

"We have accomplished all the marvelous tasks that thou assigned us; is thy daughter mine now?"

"She is thine," he replied, "for I must keep my promise, though I am loath to do so; but thou needest not to thank me, but Arthur who hath accomplished this for thee. By my free will thou shouldst never have her, for with her I lose my life."

Then Goren, the son of Custennin, the herdsman, whose brothers Yspaddaden Penkawr had slain, seized him by the hair of the head, and dragged him after him to the keep, and there cut off his head, and placed it on a stake on the citadel. After which they took possession of his castle and of his treasures.

And there was feasting and music and great rejoicing that all the tasks had been achieved, and that the wicked King Penkawr had been slain. And that night Olwen became Kilwch's bride, and she continued to be his wife as long as she lived.

**This is one of the most characteristic of the Welsh tales, and shows their love for the marvelous and their childish faith in the power of animals to think and talk like human beings. Like children of the present day, these children of the forests and hills of Wales took delight in tales in which deeds of magic and supernatural powers were prominent.**

**The characters and events which it celebrates are altogether of native origin, nor has any parallel or counterpart been discovered in any other language.**

**I have omitted a number of pages of the original of**

this story, especially those naming the tasks that were assigned to Kilwch, of which there are twenty-six in all. Many of them are even more extravagant and chimerical than those I have included.

# Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight

IT befell once when King Arthur held his Christmas feast, some of his best knights, as Sir Launcelot and his kin, Sir Marhaus, Sir Pelles, and the sons of King Pellinore, were absent, wandering in search of adventures. Still there were many good knights of the Round Table in their places, and no lack of barons and ladies to uphold the high revels. The King kept New Year's day with great splendor, bestowing rich gifts on all his knights and ladies. But when the banquet was spread at noontide, Arthur, as his custom was, would not sit at the table until some adventure should have happened.

He was not long kept waiting, for suddenly there rode into the great hall the tallest knight that had ever been seen by any of the court. His stature was that of a giant, and he had the bulk of four ordinary men. He was clad entirely in green, save that he wore spurs of bright gold. His long hair was green, and a bushy beard of the same color flowed over his breast. The mighty steed on

which he sat was also green, but its mane was decked with gold threads. This strange-looking knight carried neither spear nor shield, but in one hand he bore a holly bough, and in the other a great axe with an edge like a razor and a massive handle of solid iron. He entered without making any salutation; and the marvelous apparition of so huge a man and horse, all as green as grass, awed for the moment the boldest knight there, so that no one spoke to him. At last, in a rough voice, he asked, "Where is the governor of this company?"

At that King Arthur roused himself, saluted the Green Knight courteously, and invited him to sit down at the banquet.

"That will I not do," answered the other. "I come not here to feast, but to seek the most valiant man of thy court, that I may prove him; but methinks here are only beardless children, for I see no man who is worthy to match me. If any one of you be bold enough to strike one stroke for another this axe shall be his, and I will abide his blow, but he shall receive a stroke in return from me within twelve months and a day."

To this strange challenge none of the knights present was eager to make a reply, for all of them felt that after a single blow from so strong an arm and so formidable a weapon as those of the Green Knight, no man would be in condition either to receive or give another. When all were thus

silent, the Green Knight rolled about his eyes, and tauntingly exclaimed that the famous Knights of the Round Table were no better than a pack of cowards. Then was King Arthur wrathful, and he sprang to his feet and said that he at least feared neither the Green Knight nor his axe, and that he would himself undertake the adventure. So he seized the axe, and the knight, placidly stroking his beard, drew down his garments, bared his neck, and awaited the blow.

When Sir Gawaine saw that, he came from his seat and entreated King Arthur not to hazard his own sacred person in that adventure, but to let him undertake it instead. To this the king was loath to assent, but all the court so entreated him that at last he resigned the axe to Gawaine.

"Who, then, art thou?" said the Green Knight, eyeing scornfully his new opponent.

"Know thou well," answered Gawaine, "that I am Gawaine, son of King Lot of Orkney, Knight of the Round Table, and nephew unto our gracious lord King Arthur."

At this the Green Knight smiled grimly, saying, "It pleases me well to receive a blow from thee; but thou must swear that within a year and a day thou wilt seek me to receive a blow in return."

"Where shall I seek thee?" asked Gawaine. "Tell me thy name and abode."

"When thou hast smitten me," answered the knight, "then will I tell thee; and if I cannot speak

at all, it will be so much the better for thee. Take now the axe, and let me see how thou canst smite."

So Gawaine gripped the axe, and the knight, throwing aside his long hair, again bared and bent his neck. Sir Gawaine, lifting the axe on high, smote with all his might, and so great a blow did he give that the knight's brawny neck was smitten clean through, as if it had been a twig, and his huge head rolled on the floor of the hall. Deeming that now there was an end of their strange visitor, some of the knights pushed the head with their feet as it went past them. But they had reckoned without knowing the marvelous vitality of the Green Knight. He received Gawaine's stroke and the loss of his head as though nothing had befallen him. Striding down the hall, he picked up his head. Then stepping back again to his horse, he mounted, and held up his head at arm's length, the which, raising its eyelids and gazing sternly at Gawaine said, "Well and mighty hast thou stricken me. Now be thou ready to go forth according to thy promise, and seek till thou find me. Get thee to the Green Chapel, there to receive from me a blow on New Year's morn; and if thou fail, then art thou recreant."

So saying, the knight, still carrying his head in his outstretched hand, put spurs to his horse and dashed out of the hall. Undismayed either by this fearsome sight or by the warning words which the head had spoken, Gawaine burst out into great

laughter, in which the king and his knights presently joined, though Queen Guinevere and the ladies were still, in truth, too much afraid to do so. And the banquet proceeded without further thought of the Green Knight.

The year wore round till All-hallowmas, when Sir Gawaine began to think of his ghastly tryst with the headless knight, and prepared him for his journey. King Arthur held a feast in honor of his nephew, and thereafter Gawaine set out amid great lamentations, for there were few that expected to see him again in life, since it was certain that if the Green Knight smote off his head, he would not be able to rise and take it in his hand. But he rode forth showing no sign of fear; and after a long and tedious journey through a wild and desolate country, during which he had many perilous adventures with serpents, wolves, bulls, bears, and wild men, he found himself, on Christmas morning, in a deep forest of ancient oaks. Looking around him, he saw at a little distance the noblest castle he had ever beheld, with walls that rose to a great height, and massive towers of gray stone. Riding up to the gate, he found it shut fast, and the drawbridge raised. Lifting up his voice, Gawaine summoned the castle, and there appeared at the gate a porter, who asked his errand. The knight answered that he sought a lodging. Then answered the porter that he should be welcome to dwell there as long as he would.

Straightway the drawbridge was let down, the gate flew open, and Gawaine entered. When he dismounted from his horse it was well stabled; while many knights and squires came forward to receive the rider, conducted him into the great hall of the castle, and relieved him of his helmet and armor. Then the lord of the castle came forward, courteously bade Gawaine welcome, and embraced him. He was a man of vast stature and great strength, with a stern but noble countenance. He led Gawaine into a splendid chamber, and assigned him a page to wait upon him.

Having donned the rich robes that were provided for him, the knight returned to the hall, where he sat down with his host and the numerous guests to a noble banquet. In answer to the questions which were courteously asked him, Sir Gawaine informed his entertainer that he was a knight of King Arthur's court, whereat there was joy in the hall, and every one in the company made much of him. After dinner all the party went to the chapel to hear even-song. There Sir Gawaine sat by the lord and his lady, who was young and sprightly, and surpassed even Queen Guinevere in beauty. Gawaine at the bidding of her lord, saluted her with a kiss, whereat she blushed rosy red, and he begged permission to be her knight and servant. When even-song had been said, all returned to the hall, where they were served with wine and spices, and there was much pleasant con-

verse. The lord took off his hood—the which was adorned with gold and precious stones—placed it on a spear, and said that he who made the most mirth should have it for his guerdon. It was won by Sir Gawaine, who told many stories that he had heard in King Arthur's court; but he bestowed the hood upon the page that served him.

After three days had been pleasantly passed in feasting and merry-making, the guests began to depart, and Gawaine bethought him of the quest he was sworn to follow. But the lord of the castle sought to detain him, and asked him how it happened that he was away from Arthur's court at Christmas tide. Gawaine answered that he had a tryst at the Green Chapel on New Year's morn. The lord said he would show him the place, for it was only two miles from his castle; and to hear this Gawaine was well pleased. Then the lord said he was going out to the chase. He asked the knight to stay within and keep his lady company the while. "Whatever," he said, "I win in the chase shall be thine, and whatever thou mayst achieve while I am absent thou shalt give to me." To this mirthful bargain Gawaine cheerfully assented.

The knight of the castle went forth accordingly into the forest with huntsmen and hounds, and Gawaine in the meanwhile entertained the lady. Very soon she gave him to understand that if he would he might have her love; but he, being mind-

ful of his duty to his host, answered only that he would ever be her knight and faithful servant, nor could she gain any promise of his love from him even when she kissed him with her rosy lips. At night her lord returned, and gave to Gawaine a deer which he had slain in the chase; and thereupon Gawaine gave him in return the kiss which the lady had bestowed upon him. The lord smiled, and asked him if he had received any other tokens of his lady's love, but to that Gawaine made no answer.

The next day the lord again went forth with his men and hounds, and the lady once more sought Gawaine, to whom she again spoke tender words, and bestowed on him a second kiss, which he received with due respect and courtesy as a token of her friendship. At night the master of the castle brought back with him a wolf's skin for Gawaine, who had only the kiss to give in exchange. On the third day the fair dame again attempted to have him declare his love for her, and so marvelous was her beauty, that only by dint of great efforts did Gawaine remain true to his knightly vows. When the lady found that he would in no wise respond to her blandishments save by such courtesies as it was proper for a knight to offer, she drew from her finger a rich ring, and begged him to accept it as a keepsake; but he excused himself. Then she took off the green girdle she wore, and proffered that to him; but it also he refused.

"Ah, Sir Knight," quoth she, "surely thou wouldst not refuse the girdle didst thou but know its worth. Who so weareth that girdle bound about his body can by no means be wounded or slain."

When Gawaine heard that, he remembered that on the next day he was sworn to receive a stroke from the Green Knight, and he thought that the girdle would then be very welcome to him. So he consented to receive it from the lady. Then said she, "I will not give it to thee unless thou promise on thy knightly word to keep the gift secret from my lord." Sir Gawaine had by this time become so eager for the girdle that he promised as she desired. Then she bestowed it upon him, and three kisses also. In no long time after this his host came back with a great boar that he had slain, which he gave to Gawaine, who in return kissed him thrice, but, according to his promise, said nothing about the girdle.

On the following day, Gawaine armed himself, having first wrapped the lady's girdle about his body, mounted his good horse, and set out for the Green Chapel, having taken an affectionate leave of the lord and lady of the castle. The lord had appointed one of his men to guide him to the place, who led him through the oak-wood, and past huge mountains with their tops all shrouded in mist, till they came to the mouth of a valley all dark and desolate. Therein, said the squire, was

the Green Chapel; but he himself would go no farther, for it was the most perilous place in the world. "He who dwells there," he said, "is full stiff and stern, and bigger than any four knights in King Arthur's court. No man hath ever yet been to the Green Chapel whom he did not slay by a single blow of his hand. I counsel thee, therefore, Sir Knight, to quit this perilous quest, and withdraw thee; and if thou dost, I swear to thee that I will never reveal it."

But Gawaine, bearing in mind his promise to the Green Knight, and comforted also in heart by knowing the magic power of the girdle, would not hearken to the squire, but bade him farewell, and rode on into the ravine. Long time he rode by a wild and rugged path, amid beetling rocks and huge leafless trees, but saw nothing, till at last he came where there was a great cave in the rock, and he was aware of a horrible sound, like to the sharpening of a steel blade on a grindstone, but far louder. Nothing dismayed, the knight called out, "Who dwelleth here, with whom I may hold discourse?"

A rough voice answered, bidding him abide where he was; and presently forth from the cave strode the Green Knight, with his grim head again on his shoulders, and carrying in his hand a new axe with a blade full bright and keen.

"I give thee good-morrow, Knight," quoth he to Gawaine. "Well and truly hast thou kept thy

time. Have now thy helm off, and take thy pay at once."

"By my faith," answered Gawaine, "I do not begrudge thee thy will."

Then he took off his helm and bared his neck, and calmly awaited the blow. The Green Knight raised the axe, and brought it down with so much might that it hissed as it swept through the air, but he made it pass just by Gawaine, who shrank a little as it came by him, at which the Green Knight laughed scornfully.

"Behold," he said, "Thou art a Knight of the Table Round, and yet showest fear before thou hast felt harm. So did not I when thou didst strike me, and therefore must I be the better man."

"It is true," said Gawaine, "that I have shrunk once, but I will not shrink again. Therefore strike thou, and speedily."

Again the Green Knight brought down the axe close by his neck, but Gawaine moved not at all nor changed countenance. So the third time the knight smote him full on the neck, and the axe just drew blood, but no more. Then Gawaine drew his sword.

"Have a care," said he, "that thou strike not again, for my covenant with thee was only to receive one blow."

Then the other laughed loud, and when Gawaine

looked at him, behold he was no longer the Green Knight, but his late host, the lord of the castle.

"Know thou," said he, "that I sent my lady to thee to test thy knightly honor, and in the main I found thee true; but thou sinnedst a little for love of thy life when thou didst take the girdle and spoke nothing of it to me."

Then was Gawaine sore abashed, and he denounced bitterly his own cowardice and covetousness, and took off the girdle and threw it to the lord of the castle.

"Nay," said the other, "now that thou art repentant, I hold thee to be as free from dishonor as if thou hadst never sinned."

And he gave him the girdle as a token of his adventure, and invited him to return again with him to the castle. This, however, Gawaine, who was still exceedingly ashamed, would not do; but he desired to be remembered to the fair lady that had sought to beguile him. He thanked the lord for the girdle, and said he would wear it in memory of his good lady and also of his own fault. Then he asked the other for his name, and the knight said he was called Bernlak de Hautdesert, and that he served Morgan le Fay. She it was who had caused him to go in the guise of the Green Knight to Camelot, to test the renown of the Round Table, hoping to grieve Arthur and Guinevere. Then the two parted, and Gawaine rode back to Camelot,

where he was joyfully welcomed, and told all his adventures even as they have been here set down.

This quaint tale is not found in the Mabinogion, but it is so similar in thought and spirit to those stories that I have thought it well to include it with them. It is copied from an English publication with a few slight changes to adapt it more fully to American youth. It is seen to be a real Arthurian tale, though it is not given by Malory in his story of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table.

# Peredur, the Son of Evrawc

## Chapter I

### How Peredur Became a Knight

MANY years ago an earl named Evrawc owned the earldom of the North. He had seven sons; and the youngest was named Peredur. Now Earl Evrawc delighted in tournaments and combats and wars, and so it happened that in a war he was slain and six of his sons with him. His youngest son, Peredur, was not of an age to go to wars, otherwise he might have been slain as well as his father and his brothers.

Now Peredur's mother was very anxious for fear her younger son should also delight in tournaments and wars and be slain like his father and brothers, so she fled with him to the wilderness and would permit none to bear her company, but women and boys and timid men that knew not the use of arms. And no one dared to bring her either horses or arms, lest her son should set his mind upon them and desire to be a knight. The youth went daily into the forest to divert himself by flinging sticks and stones at the trees and other objects found there. And thus he grew to be a

young man and knew nothing of knights and the arts of knighthood.

One day as it chanced, three knights came riding along a road that ran by the borders of the forest. These knights were in pursuit of one who had stolen some apples from King Arthur's court; and one of them was Owain, the son of Urien. As Peredur saw these men he said to his mother,

"Mother, what are those yonder?"

"They are angels, my son," said she.

"By my faith," said Peredur, "I will go and become an angel with them."

So Peredur went to the road and met them. As Owain saw him he said:

"Young man, sawest thou a knight pass this way either to-day or yesterday?"

"I know not," answered Peredur, "what is a knight?"

"Why such an one as I am," said Owain.

As Peredur gazed in admiration on Owain he said, "If thou wilt tell me what I ask thee, I will tell thee that which thou askest me."

"Gladly will I do so," replied Owain.

"What is this?" said Peredur, pointing to the saddle on one of the horses.

"That is a saddle," said Owain.

"What is this?" he said, pointing to the bridle rein.

"That is a bridle," said Owain.

Then he asked Owain about all the accoutre-

ments which he saw upon the men and the horses, and about the arms, and what they were for, and how they were used. And Owain showed him all these things fully, and told him what use was made of them.

"Go forward," said Peredur, "for I saw such an one as thou dost enquire for, and I will follow thee."

Then Peredur returned to his mother and said to her, "Mother, they were not angels, but honorable knights."

At this his mother's heart was so full of grief and surprise that she swooned away. Then Peredur went to the stables where they kept the horses that carried firewood from the forest and that brought meat and drink from the country around the forest to his mother's house. Selecting a bony piebald horse, which seemed to him the strongest of them, he pressed a pack into the form of a saddle, and with twisted twigs he imitated the trappings which he had seen upon the horses of Owain. And when he came again to his mother, the Countess, he found that she had recovered from her swoon, but her heart was full of grief for what Peredur had seen and heard.

"My son," said the Countess, "desirest thou to ride forth like the knights which thou didst see?"

"Yes, with thy leave," he replied.

"Wait, then," she said, "that I may counsel thee before thou goest."

"I will do so willingly," he replied, "but please speak quickly."

"Then," she said, "go forward to the court of King Arthur, where there are the best and the boldest and the most bountiful of men. And remember that wherever thou seest a church, repeat there thy Paternoster unto it. And if thou hear an outcry of one in distress, proceed toward it, especially if it be the outcry of a woman. And if thou see meat and drink and need them, and no one has the kindness or courtesy to give them to thee, take them thyself. And if thou find a fair jewel take it and give it to another, for thus thou shall obtain praise of men. And if thou see a fair woman, pay thy court to her with all courtesy; for thus thou wilt win esteem and worship."

With this advice Peredur bade his mother adieu and mounted his horse, and taking a handful of sharp pointed forks in his hand, he rode forth towards King Arthur's court. After two days journey he came to a vast wildwood, and far within the wood he saw a fair even glade, and in the glade he saw a tent, and the tent seeming to him to be a church, he said his Paternoster unto it. Then he went towards the tent, and found the door of the tent was open. Looking in the tent he saw a golden chair near the door, and on the chair sat a lovely auburn-haired maiden, with a golden frontlet on her forehead, and sparkling stones in the frontlet, and a large gold ring on her hand.

Then Peredur dismounted and went within the tent; and the maiden seemed glad at his coming, and bade him welcome.

At the entrance of the tent he saw food and two full flasks of wine, and two loaves of fine wheaten flour, and collops of the flesh of the wild boar.

"My mother told me," said Peredur, "that when I saw meat and drink I should take it."

"Take the meat, and welcome, chieftain," said the maiden.

So Peredur took half of the meat and the wine for himself, and left the other half for the maiden. And when he had finished eating, he bent upon his knee before the maiden.

"My mother told me, also," said he, "that when I saw a fair jewel, to take it."

"Do so, if you wish," said she.

So Peredur took the ring that was on the maiden's hand and then mounted his horse and proceeded on his journey.

Soon after this, behold the knight came to whom the tent belonged; and he was the lord of the glade. And seeing the track of a horse, he said to the maiden, "Tell me who has been here since I was absent."

"A man," said she, "with wonderful demeanor." And she described to him the appearance and the conduct of Peredur.

"Did he offer thee any wrong?" said the lord.

"No," answered the maiden, "by my faith he did not."

"By my faith I do not believe thee," he replied; "and until I can meet him and revenge the insult he has done me, thou shalt not remain two nights in the same house." And the knight arose, and set forth to seek Peredur.

Meanwhile, Peredur journeyed on toward King Arthur's court. But before he reached it, another knight had been there who gave a ring of thick gold at the door of the gate to the porter for holding his horse, and went into the hall, where King Arthur and his household and Queen Guinevere and her maidens were assembled. As he entered the page of the chamber was serving Queen Guinevere with a golden goblet. Striding quickly up to the queen the knight dashed the liquor that was therein upon her face and said, "If any have the boldness to dispute the goblet with me and to revenge this insult to Queen Guinevere, let him follow me to the meadow, and there will I await him."

So saying the knight mounted his horse and rode to the meadow. And all the household hung down their heads, lest any of them should be requested to go and avenge the insult to Queen Guinevere. For they thought no one would have dared to do such a deed unless he was possessed with magic powers, so that he could take vengence upon any one who dared to encounter him.

Just then, behold, Peredur entered the hall on the bony piebald horse with the uncouth trappings upon it; and in this way he traversed the whole length of the hall. In the centre of the hall stood the seneschal, Sir Kay.

"Tell me, tall man," said Peredur, "is that King Arthur yonder?"

"What wouldst thou with King Arthur?" asked Kay.

"My mother told me," replied Peredur, "to go to Arthur and receive the honor of knighthood."

"By my faith," answered Kay, "thou art all too meanly equipped with horse and with arms to receive this honor." Thereupon the youth was perceived by all the household, and amused at his odd appearance, they laughed at him and threw sticks upon him.

Then, behold, a dwarf came forward, who with a female dwarf had been a full year at King Arthur's court; and neither of them had spoken a single word to anyone. When the dwarf beheld Peredur he said, "Ha, ha! the welcome of Heaven be unto thee, goodly Peredur, son of Evrawc, the chief of warriors and the flower of knighthood."

"Truly," said Kay, speaking to the dwarf, "thou art ill taught to remain mute at King Arthur's court a year with choice of society; and now, before the face of King Arthur and his household to declare such a man as this chief of warriors and the flower of knighthood." And he gave the dwarf

such a box on the ear that he fell senseless to the ground.

At this the female dwarf cried out, "Ha, ha! goodly Peredur, son of Evrawc; the welcome of Heaven be unto thee, flower of knights and the light of chivalry."

"Of a truth, maiden," said Kay, "thou art ill bred to remain mute for a year at the court of King Arthur, and then speak as thou dost of such a man as this." And Kay kicked her with his foot, so that she fell to the ground senseless.

Then said Peredur, "Tall man, show me which is King Arthur."

"Hold thy peace," said Kay, "and go after the knight who went hence to the meadow and take from him the goblet, and overthrow him, and possess thyself of his horse and arms, and then thou shalt receive the order of knighthood."

"I will do so, tall man," said Peredur. So he turned his horse's head toward the meadow. And when he came there the knight was riding up and down, proud of his strength and valor and noble mien.

"Tell me," said the knight, "didst thou see any one coming after me from the court?"

"The tall man that was there," said Peredur, "desired me to come and overthow thee, and to take from thee the goblet and thy horse and armor for myself."

"Go back to the court," said the knight, "and

tell King Arthur either to come himself, or to send some other to fight with me; and unless he do so quickly I will not wait for him."

"By my faith," said Peredur, "choose thou whether it shall be willingly or unwillingly, but I will have the horse and the arms and the goblet."

Upon this the knight ran at him furiously, and struck him a violent blow with the shaft of his spear between the neck and shoulder.

"Ha, ha! lad," said Peredur, "my mother's servants were not used to play with me in this wise; therefore thus will I play with thee." And thereupon he struck him with a sharp-pointed fork, and it hit him in the eye and came out at the back of the neck, so that he instantly fell down lifeless.

When Peredur left the court, Owain said to Kay, "Verily thou wert ill-advised when thou didst send that madman after the insulting knight. For one of two things must befall him; he must be either overthrown or slain. If he is overthrown, the knight will be counted by him to be an honorable person of the court, and an eternal disgrace will it be to King Arthur and his warriors. And if he is slain, the disgrace will be the same; and moreover the sin will be upon him; therefore will I go and see what has befallen him."

So Owain went to the meadow, and there he saw Peredur dragging the man about. "What art thou doing," said Owain.

"This iron coat will never come off him, at least not by my efforts," answered Peredur.

Then Owain unfastened the armor, saying, "Here, my good soul, is a horse and armor better than thine. Take them joyfully, and come with me to King Arthur to receive the order of knighthood, for thou dost merit it."

"May I never show my face again, if I go," said Peredur. "But take thou the goblet to Queen Guinevere and tell King Arthur that wherever I am I will be his vassal and will do him what profit and service I am able. And say that I will not come to court until I have encountered the tall man that is there, to revenge the injury he did to the dwarf and the dwarfess."

So Owain went back to the court and related all these things to King Arthur and Queen Guinevere and to all the household; and they were all amazed at his words and at the valiant deeds of the young knight.

And Peredur rode forward; and as he proceeded behold a knight met him.

"Whence comest thou?" said the knight.

"I come from King Arthur's court," replied Peredur.

"Art thou one of his men?" said the knight.

"Yes, by my faith," he answered.

"Well, I have always been King Arthur's enemy," said the knight, "and all such of his men that I have ever encountered I have slain." So saying

he rushed upon Peredur, who met him right valiantly, and it was not long before Peredur brought him to the ground. Then the knight besought his mercy.

"Mercy shalt thou have," said Peredur, "if thou wilt make oath to me that thou wilt go to King Arthur's court, and tell him that it was I that overthrew thee, for the honor of his service; and say that I will never come to his court until I have avenged the insult offered to the dwarf and the dwarfess."

The knight, glad to be released on such easy terms, willingly pledged him his faith to do as he was bidden, and then proceeded to the court of King Arthur, and said as he had promised and conveyed the threat to Kay.

Again Peredur rode forward; and within a week he encountered sixteen knights and overthrew them all. And they all went to King Arthur's court, taking with them the same message which the first knight had conveyed from Peredur, and the same threat which he had sent to Kay. And thereupon Kay was reproved by King Arthur, at which Kay was greatly grieved.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW PEREDUR RESCUED A FAIR LADY

AND Peredur rode forward until he came to a lake at the shore of which was a fair castle. On the border of the lake he saw a venerable hoary-headed man, clothed in velvet and sitting upon a velvet cushion. When the aged man saw Peredur approaching he arose and went toward the castle; and Peredur rode on to the palace and as the door was opened he entered the hall. There he saw the aged man seated upon a cushion and a large blazing fire burning before him.

The man asked Peredur to come and sit upon the cushion with him; and they sat there and conversed together. When it was time, the tables were laid, and they went to meat. When they had finished their meal, the man asked Peredur if he knew well how to fight with the sword.

To this the youth replied "I know not, but were I to be taught, doubtless I should learn."

"Whoever can play well with the cudgel and shield will also be able to fight with the sword," said the man.

Now the man had two sons; the one had yellow

hair and the other auburn hair. And the aged man said to his sons, "Arise, youths, and play with the cudgel and the shield," and so they did.

And after they had played awhile the man said, "Which of the youths thinkest thou plays the better?"

"I think," said Peredur, "that the yellow haired youth could draw blood from the other, if he chose."

"Arise thou then and take the cudgel and the shield from the hand of the youth with the auburn hair, and draw blood from the yellow haired youth if thou canst," said the man.

So Peredur arose and went to play with the yellow haired youth; and he lifted up his arm and struck him such a mighty blow that his brow fell over his eye and the blood gushed forth.

"Ah, my life," said the man. "Come now and sit down by me, for I see that thou wilt become the best fighter with the sword on this island. I am thy uncle, thy mother's brother; and thou shalt live with me awhile to learn the manners and customs of different countries, and such gentleness and noble bearing as doth become a knight. Leave thou the habits of thy youth, and I will be thy teacher; and I will raise thee to the rank of knight from this time forward." And so his uncle taught him many acts of knightly gentleness and courtesy.

Soon after Peredur took his horse and with his uncle's permission rode forth again. And he came

to a vast desert wood, and on the further side of the wood was a meadow, and on the further side of the meadow was a large castle. Thither he bent his way and found the gate open and went into the hall. And there he beheld a stately hoary-headed man sitting on one side of the hall with many pages around him, and the man arose to receive Peredur. And they placed him beside the owner of the palace. Then they talked together for awhile, and when it was time to eat they caused Peredur to sit beside the nobleman during the repast.

When they had eaten as much as they desired, the nobleman asked Peredur whether he could fight with a sword.

"Were I to receive instruction," said Peredur, "I think I could."

Now there was on the floor of the hall a huge staple of iron, as large as a warrior could grasp. "Take that sword," said the man," and strike the iron staple."

Then Peredur arose and took the sword and struck the staple, so that he cut it in two; and the sword broke into two parts also.

"Place the two parts together and reunite them," said the man.

So Peredur placed them together, and they became united as before. And a second time he struck upon the staple, so that both it and the sword broke in two, and as before he reunited

them. And the third time he gave a like blow and placed the broken parts together, but neither the staple nor the sword would reunite as before.

Then the man said, "Youth, come now and sit down, and my blessing be upon thee. Thou fightest better with the sword than any man in the kingdom, and when thou art older and hast attained to thy full power, none will be able to contend with thee."

"I am thy uncle," he said, "and brother to the man in whose house thou didst stay the night before."

Then Peredur and his uncle discoursed together; and as they talked there came two youths into the hall bearing a spear of mighty size, with three streams of blood flowing from the point to the ground. When all the company saw this they began wailing and lamenting. And when the clamor had a little subsided, behold two maidens entered with a large salver between them, on which was a man's head surrounded by a profusion of blood. And there was again a great outcry, but at length they were all silent. And when it was time that they should sleep, Peredur was led into a fair chamber where he spent the night.

The next day, with his uncle's permission, Peredur rode forth. And he came to a wood, and far within the wood he heard a loud cry, and he saw a beautiful woman with auburn hair, and a horse with a saddle upon it standing near her, and a

corpse by her side. As she strove to place the body of the knight upon the horse, it fell to the ground, and thereupon she made great lamentation.

"Tell me, sister," said Peredur, "wherefore art thou bewailing?"

"Oh! accursed Peredur! Little pity has my ill fortune ever met with from thee."

"Wherefore," said Peredur, "am I accursed?"

"Because thou wast the cause of thy mother's death; for when thou didst ride forth against her will, anguish seized upon her heart, so that she died; and therefore thou art accursed. And the dwarf and the dwarfess that thou sawest at Arthur's court were the dwarfs of thy father and mother. I am thy foster sister, and this was my wedded husband, and he was slain by the knight that is in the glade of the wood. And do not thou go near him, lest thou shouldst be slain by him likewise."

"My sister," answered Peredur, "thou dost reproach me wrongfully; for through my remaining so long amongst you I shall scarcely be able to vanquish him; and had I continued longer with you it would have been impossible for me to succeed. Cease therefore thy lamenting, and I will bury the body of thy husband and then go in quest of the knight and see if I can do vengeance upon him."

When he had buried the body, they went to the place where the knight was, and found him riding

proudly along the glade; and he inquired of Peredur whence he came.

"I came from King Arthur's court," said Peredur.

"Art thou one of King Arthur's men?" asked the knight.

"Yes, by my faith," said Peredur.

Then without further parlance they fell to, and immediately Peredur overthrew the knight, and he besought mercy of Peredur.

"Mercy shalt thou have upon these terms," said Peredur, "that thou take this woman in marriage, and do her all honor and reverence, and go to King Arthur's court and tell him that it was I that sent you, and tell him I never will come to his court again until I have met the tall man that is there and taken vengeance upon him for his insult to the dwarf and the dwarfess."

So the knight provided the lady with a horse and garments suitable to her, and took her with him to King Arthur's court. And he told King Arthur all that had occurred, and gave the defiance to Kay. And King Arthur and all his household reproved Kay for having driven such a youth as Peredur from his court.

And Owain said, "This youth will never come into the court until Kay has gone forth from it."

"By my faith," said King Arthur, "I will search all the deserts in the Island of Britain, until I find

Peredur, and then let him and his adversary do their utmost to each other."

Then again Peredur rode forward, and came to a desert wood, at the upper end of which he saw a great castle, wherein were many strong towers. So he rode to the castle and entered the hall, and there he saw eighteen youths, lean and red-headed, each of the same height and aspect, and of the same dress. And they were all well skilled in courtesy and in service.

The youths disarrayed him and then sat down to discourse with him. Thereupon, behold five maidens came from the chamber into the hall; and Peredur thought that he had never seen any one so fair as the chief of the maidens. Her skin was whiter than the bloom of crystal, and her hair and eyebrows were blacker than jet, and on her cheeks were two red spots, redder than whatever is reddest. The maiden welcomed Peredur, and put her arms about his neck, and made him sit down beside her. And when they went to meat Peredur observed that the maiden wished to give him more of the food and liquor than was given to any other.

When it was time to sleep, a chamber was prepared for Peredur, and he went to rest. Then the young men said to the fairest of the maidens that she should go to the chamber and offer to become the wife of the youth. But she replied that this would be unfitting, unless she first should be wooed by him. To this the youths replied that un-

less she should do as they had said, they would leave her with her enemies to do with her as they would. Then, through fear, the maiden went forth, and shedding many tears proceeded to the chamber where Peredur was sleeping. At the voice of her weeping, Peredur awoke and said,

"Tell me, my sister, wherefore dost thou weep?"

"I will tell thee, lord," she answered.

Then she told him how her father had possessed this palace and one of the best earldoms in the kingdom, and that the son of another earl sought her for a wife, and her father would not give her against her will; but now that her father was dead, the young earl had made war upon her and taken all her possessions except the palace in which they were, and that to-morrow the earl was to come against the palace with all his forces.

"And if I fall into his power," she said, "my fate will be no better than to be given over to the grooms of his horses. Therefore I come to place myself in thy hands that thou mayest succor me, either by taking me hence or by defending me here as may seem best unto thee."

When he heard this Peredur said, "Go, my sister, and sleep; nor will I depart from thee until I prove whether I can assist thee or not."

Then the maiden went again to rest, and the next morning she came again to Peredur and saluted him.

"Heaven prosper thee," said Peredur, "but what tidings dost thou bring?"

"None other," she replied, "but that the earl with all his forces has alighted at the gate."

"Truly," said Peredur, "let my horse be made ready."

So his horse was accoutred, and he mounted it and sallied forth to the meadow. There he saw a knight riding proudly along the meadow, having raised the signal for battle. Then Peredur rode forward and met him, and with his spear threw him over his horse's crupper to the ground.

Near the close of day, one of the chief knights came to fight with him, and he overthrew him also so that he besought mercy.

Then said Peredur, "Who art thou?"

"Verily," said he, "I am master of the household to the Earl."

"How much of the maiden's possessions is there in thy power?"

"The third part, verily," he replied.

"Then," said Peredur, "restore to her the third part of her possessions in full, and all the profit thou hast made of it, and offer to be her captive, unless she wish to take thy life."

This the knight did forthwith. And that night the maiden was right joyful, and they all fared plenteously.

The next day Peredur rode forth to the meadow, and that day he vanquished a multitude of the

hosts. At the close of day there came riding in the field a proud and stately knight; and Peredur met him and overthrew him so that he besought his mercy.

"Who art thou?" said Peredur.

"I am the steward of the palace," said he.

"And how much of the maiden's possessions is under thy control?"

"One third part," he answered.

"Verily," said Peredur, "thou shalt fully restore to the maiden her possessions, and moreover thou shalt give her meat and drink for two hundred men and their horses; and for thyself, thou shalt be her captive."

And immediately it was done as Peredur had ordered.

On the third day Peredur rode forth again to the meadow, and vanquished many more than on either of the preceding days. And at the close of day, an earl came to encounter him, and he overthrew the earl so that he besought mercy.

"Who art thou?" said Peredur.

"I am the Earl," he said; "I will not conceal it from thee."

"Then," said Peredur, "thou shalt restore the whole of the maiden's earldom, and shalt give her thine own earldom in addition thereto, and meat and drink for three hundred men; and thou thyself shalt remain in her power." And thus it was fulfilled.

And after this Peredur tarried three weeks in the country, causing tribute and obedience to be paid to the maiden, and the government to be placed in her hands.

Then he said to the maiden, "Now with thy leave I must go hence."

"Verily, my brother," replied the maiden, "desirest thou this?"

"Yes, by my faith," he replied, "and had it not been for my love for thee, I would not have been here so long."

"My soul," said she, "who art thou?"

"I am Peredur, the son of Evrawc, and if ever thou art in trouble or in danger, acquaint me therewith, and if I can I will protect thee."

And then Peredur rode forth again, leaving the maiden very sad that she must part with him, for she had hoped that he might ask her to be his bride.

## CHAPTER III

### HOW PEREDUR AVENGED HIMSELF ON SIR KAY

NOW as Peredur rode he came to a castle. And he struck upon the gate with his lance, and behold an auburn-haired youth opened the gate, and he had the stature of a warrior and the years of a boy. As Peredur came into the hall, he saw there a tall and stately lady sitting in a chair, and many hand-maidens around her; and the lady seemed happy at his coming. She saluted him with great courtesy, and when it was time they went to supper.

After their repast was finished, the lady said, "It were well for thee, chieftain, to go elsewhere to sleep."

"Wherefore," Peredur said, "can I not sleep here?"

"Because," she answered, "nine sorceresses are in this castle, and unless we can make our escape before daybreak we shall be slain, for already they have laid waste all the country except this castle."

"Behold," said Peredur, "I shall remain here to-night, and if you are in trouble, I will do you what service I can, but no harm shall you receive from me."

So they all went to rest, and at the break of day Peredur heard a dreadful outcry. And he arose hastily, and went forth in his vest and doublet, with his sword about his neck; and he saw a sorceress overtake one of the watch, who cried out violently. Then Peredur attacked the sorceress, and struck her upon the head with his sword so that he flattened her helmet like a dish upon her head.

At this she cried out, "Mercy, goodly Peredur, son of Evrawc, I cry thee for mercy."

"How knowest thou, hag, that I am Peredur."

"By destiny, and the fore-knowledge that I am to suffer harm from thee," she said.

"Thou shalt have mercy," Peredur replied, "if thou wilt pledge thy faith that thou wilt nevermore injure the dominions of the Countess."

And Peredur took surety of this, and with the permission of the Countess he set forth with the sorceress to the palace of the sorceresses. And there he remained for three weeks, and then he made a choice of a horse and arms and went his way, and in the evening he entered a valley, and at the head of the valley he came to a hermit's cell, and the hermit welcomed him gladly, and he spent the night there. And in the morning he arose, and when he went forth, behold a shower of snow had fallen the night before, and a hawk had killed a wild fowl in front of the cell. The noise of the horse had scared the hawk away, and a raven had alighted on the bird. And Peredur stood and

compared the blackness of the raven, and the whiteness of the snow, and the redness of the blood to the hair of the lady he loved best, which was blacker than jet, and to her skin which was whiter than snow, and to the two red spots upon her cheeks which were redder than the blood upon the new fallen snow.

Now King Arthur and his knights were in search of Peredur; and as they came that way and saw him thus standing in thought, King Arthur said:

"Know ye who is the knight with a long spear that stands by the brook up yonder?"

"Lord," said one of them, "I will go and learn who he is."

So the youth came to the place where Peredur was standing, and asked him who he was and why he stood thus in thought. But so intensely was he thinking of the lady whom he loved that Peredur gave the youth no answer. Then the youth thrust at Peredur with his lance; and Peredur turned upon him and struck him over his horse's crupper to the ground. And after this, four and twenty youths came to him, and he gave the same reception to them all, bringing them with a single thrust to the ground.

Then came Kay and spoke to Peredur rudely and angrily, at which Peredur took him with his lance under the jaw, and cast him from him with a thrust, so that he broke his arm and his shoulder

blade, and then he rode over him one and twenty times.

Now while Kay lay thus stunned with the violence of the pain, his horse returned to the palace at a wild and prancing pace. When the household saw the horse come back without the rider, they rode forth in haste to where the encounter had taken place, and there they found Kay, and at first they thought that he was slain; but afterward they thought that if he had a skillful physician he yet might live. So they brought Kay to King Arthur's tent, and the King caused skillful physicians to care for him. And King Arthur was grieved that Kay had met with this reverse, for he loved him greatly.

During all this while Peredur moved not from his meditation, at which they all marvelled. But Gawaine said, "It is not fitting that an humble knight should be disturbed from his thought, for he may be reflecting on some damage he hath sustained, or perhaps he may be thinking of the lady he best loves. And if it seems best to thee, Lord Arthur, I will go and speak to him and ask him courteously to come and visit thee."

At this Kay was wroth, and spoke angry and spiteful words, saying that the knight was weary with fighting, and to bring him now would give no honor to Gawaine.

To this Gawaine replied, "Thou mightest use more pleasant words, for it behooveth thee not

to wreak thy wrath upon me for thy overthrow. Methinks I shall bring the knight thither with me without breaking either my arm or my shoulder."

Then said King Arthur to Gawaine, "Thou speakest like a wise and prudent man. Go, and take enough of armor about thee, and choose thy horse."

So Gawaine accoutered himself and rode forward hastily to the place where Peredur was. And Peredur was resting on the shaft of his spear, still pondering the same thought. Gawaine came to him without any signs of hostility, and said to him,

"If I thought that it would be as agreeable to thee as to me, I would converse with thee. I have also a message from King Arthur unto thee, to pray thee to come and visit him. And two men have been before on this errand."

"That is true," said Peredur, "and uncourteously they came. They attacked me, and I was annoyed thereat, for it was not pleasing to me to be drawn from the thought that I was in, for I was thinking of the lady whom best I love, and she was brought to my mind as I was looking upon the snow and upon the raven, and upon the drops of blood upon the snow. And I bethought me that her whiteness was like that of the snow, and the blackness of her hair and her eyebrows like that of the raven, and that the two red spots upon her cheeks were like the two drops of blood."

"That was not an ungentle thought," said Ga-

waine, "and I should marvel if it were pleasant to thee to be drawn from it."

"Tell me," said Peredur, "is Kay in King Arthur's court?"

"He is," replied Gawain, "and behold he is the knight that fought thee last; and it would have been better for him had he not come, for his arm and his shoulder blade were broken with the blow which he had from thy spear."

"Verily," said Peredur, "I am not sorry to have thus begun to avenge the insult to the dwarf and dwarfess."

Then Gawaine marvelled to hear him speak of the dwarf and the dwarfess. And he approached him and threw his arms around his neck, and asked him what was his name.

"Peredur, the son of Evrawc, am I called," said he, "and who art thou?"

"I am called Gawaine," he replied.

"I am right glad to meet with thee," said Peredur, "for in every country where I have been, I have heard of thy fame for prowess and uprightness, and I solicit thy fellowship."

"Thou shalt have it, by my faith; and grant me thine," said he.

"Gladly will I do so," answered Peredur.

So they rode forth together joyfully toward the place where King Arthur was, and when Kay saw them coming, he said, "I knew that Gawaine needed not to fight the knight; and it is no wonder

that he should gain fame, for more can he do by his fair words, than I by the strength of my arm."

And Peredur went with Gawaine to his tent, and they took off their armor, and Peredur put on garments like those that Gawaine wore; and then they went together unto King Arthur and saluted him.

"Behold, lord," said Gawaine, "him whom thou hast sought so long."

"Welcome unto thee, chieftain," said King Arthur. "With me thou shalt remain, and had I known thy valor had been such, thou shouldst not have left me as thou didst; nevertheless, this was predicted of thee by the dwarf and dwarfess, whom Kay ill treated, and whom thou hast avenged."

And thereupon there came the Queen and her hand-maidens; and Peredur saluted them. And they were all rejoiced to see him, and bade him welcome. And King Arthur did him great honor and respect, and they returned to Caerleon.

## CHAPTER IV

### HOW PEREDUR WON HIS LADY LOVE

ON the night Peredur came to King Arthur's court, after the evening meal, he walked in the city. And behold there met him a fair maiden named Angharad Law Evrawc.

As Peredur saw her, he said, "By my faith, sister, thou art a beauteous and a lovely maiden; and were it pleasing to thee I could love thee above all women."

"I pledge my faith," she said, "that I do not love thee, nor will I ever do so."

"I also pledge my faith," said Peredur, "that I will never speak a word to any Christian again, until thou come to love me above all men."

The next day Peredur went forth by the high road, along a mountain ridge, and he saw a valley of a circular form, the confines of which were rocky and wooded. And the flat part of the valley was in meadows, and there were fields betwixt the meadows and the wood. And in the bosom of the wood he saw large black houses of uncouth workmanship. And he dismounted and led his horse toward the wood.

A little way within the wood he saw a rocky

ledge along which the road lay. And upon the ledge was a lion, bound by a chain and sleeping. And beneath the lion he saw a deep pit of immense size, full of the bones of men and animals. And Peredur drew his sword and struck the lion so that he fell into the mouth of the pit and hung there by the chain, and with a second blow he struck the chain and broke it, and the lion fell into the pit.

Then Peredur led his horse over the rocky ledge, until he came into the valley. In the centre of the valley he saw a fine castle, and he went toward it. And in the meadow by the castle he beheld a huge gray man sitting, who was larger than any man he had ever seen before. And two young pages were smoothing the hilts of their daggers, made of the bones of the seahorse. One of the pages had red hair, and the other auburn hair. And they went before him to the place where the gray man was, and Peredur saluted him. And the gray man said, "Disgrace to the beard of my porter." Then Peredur understood that the porter was the lion.

And the gray man and the pages went together unto the castle, and Peredur accompanied them, and he found it a fair and noble place. And they proceeded to the hall, and the tables were already laid, and upon them was an abundance of food and liquor. And thereupon he saw an aged woman and a young woman come from the chambers, and

they were the most stately women he had ever seen. Then they washed and went to meat; and the gray man sat at the upper seat at the end of the table, and the aged woman sat next to him. And Peredur and the maiden were placed together, and the two young pages served them.

As they ate the maiden gazed steadfastly upon Peredur and wept. And Peredur asked the maiden wherefore she was sad and weeping. To which the maiden said, "I am sad that so gentle a youth should have so sad a doom as awaits thee to-morrow. Sawest thou the numerous black horses in the bosom of the wood? All these belong to the vassals of the gray man yonder, who is my father. And they are all giants; and to-morrow they will rise up against thee and will slay thee. And the Round Valley is this valley called."

"I thank thee, fair maiden," said Peredur, "for thy kindness; and now I ask wilt thou contrive that my horse and arms shall be in the same lodging with me to-night?"

"Gladly will I cause it to be so," she replied, "if I can."

When it was time for them to sleep rather than carouse, they went to rest. And the maiden caused Peredur's horse and arms to be in the same lodging with him. And the next morning Peredur heard a great tumult of men and horses about the castle. And he arose and armed himself and his horse, and went to the meadow.

Then the aged woman and the maiden came to the gray man and said, "Lord, take the word of the young man that he will never disclose what he hath seen in this place, and we will be his sureties that he keep it."

"I will not do so, by my faith," said the gray man. "For we shall set upon him and slay him."

So Peredur was compelled to fight with the gray man and his hosts; and toward evening he had slain one-third of them without receiving any hurt himself. Then said the aged woman to the gray man, "Behold, many of thy host have been slain by the youth; do thou therefore grant him mercy."

"I will not grant it by my faith," said he.

The aged woman and the fair maiden were upon the battlements of the castle looking forth at the battle; and at that juncture Peredur encountered the yellow haired youth and slew him. At this the maiden said, "Lord, grant the young man mercy."

"That will I not do, by Heaven," he replied. Therewith Peredur attacked the auburn-haired youth and slew him likewise.

Then the maiden said, "It were better thou hadst accorded mercy to the youth before he had slain both of thy sons; for now scarcely wilt thou thyself escape from him."

To this the gray man replied, "Go, maiden, and beseech the youth to grant mercy unto us, for we yield ourselves into his hands."

So the maiden came to the place where Peredur

was, and besought mercy for her father and for such of his vassals as had escaped alive. "Thou shalt have it on condition," said Peredur, "that thy father and all that are under him go and render homage to King Arthur; and tell him that it was his vassal Peredur that did him this service."

"This will he do willingly," said the maiden.

"And you shall also receive baptism," said Peredur; "and I will send to King Arthur and beseech him to bestow this valley upon thee and upon thy heirs after thee forever."

Then they went in, and the gray man and the tall woman saluted Peredur. And the gray man said unto him, "Since I have possessed this valley I have not seen any Christian depart with his life, save thyself. And we will go to do homage to King Arthur and embrace his faith and be baptized."

Then said Peredur, "I render thanks to Heaven that I have not broken my vow to the lady that I love best, which was, that I would not speak one word unto any Christian until she gave me her love."

That night they tarried there; and the next day in the morning the gray man and his company set forth to King Arthur's court. And they did homage to King Arthur, and he caused them to be baptized. And the gray man told King Arthur that it was Peredur that had vanquished them. And the King gave the valley to the gray man

and his company to hold it as Peredur had besought. And with King Arthur's permission, the gray man went back to the Round Valley.

And Peredur rode forward again the next day, and he traversed a vast tract of desert in which no dwellings were. And at length he came to a habitation which was mean and small. And there he heard that there was a serpent that lay upon a gold ring, and suffered none to inhabit the country for seven miles around. And Peredur came to the place where he heard the serpent was. And angrily and furiously and desperately he fought with the serpent; and at last he killed it, and took away the ring.

And thus he continued for a long time without speaking a word to any Christian. And therefore he lost his color and his aspect through extreme longing for King Arthur's court and his companions and the society of the lady whom best he loved. At length he proceeded forward to King Arthur's court, and in the wood there met him King Arthur's household going on a particular errand, with Kay at their head. And Peredur knew them all, but none of the household recognized him.

Then Kay spoke to him saying, "Whence comest thou, chieftain?" And thus he asked him twice and three times, but Peredur answered him not. And then Kay thrust him through the thigh with his lance; and lest he should be compelled to speak

And behold one day Angharad Law Ebrawc met him

and thus to break his vow, he went on without stopping.

Then said Gawaine, "I declare to Heaven, Kay, that thou hast acted ill in committing such an outrage on a youth like this who cannot speak."

And Gawaine returned to King Arthur's court and said to Queen Guinevere, "Seest thou how wicked an outrage Kay has committed upon the youth, who cannot speak; for Heaven's sake and for mine, I pray thee, cause him to have medical care before I come back, and I will repay thee the charge."

And before the men returned from the errand, a strange knight came to the meadow beside King Arthur's palace, to dare some one to encounter with him. And his challenge was accepted; and Peredur fought with him and overthrew him. And for a week he overthrew one knight every day. And thus for a long while every knight that came that way and offered battle was overthrown by Peredur. And yet he never spoke and for this he went by the name of the Dumb Youth. And no one knew who he was.

And behold one day Angharad Law Evrawc met him. Pleased with his comely appearance and knowing his many brave deeds, she said, "I declare to Heaven, chieftain, woeful is it that thou canst not speak; for couldst thou speak, I would love thee best of all men; and by my faith, even though thou canst not speak, I do love thee above all."

"Heaven reward thee, my sister," said Peredur, "for by my faith I do also love thee. And I have kept my word never to speak to any Christian until thou givest me thy love."

Thereupon it was known that he was Peredur. And thus he won the fair Angharad for his bride. And for many days he remained at King Arthur's court, having punished Kay for his insult to the dwarf and dwarfess; and there he held fellowship with Gawaine and with Owain the son of Urien, and with all the household of the King.

## CHAPTER V

### HOW PEREDUR SLEW THE SERPENT ADDANC

IT chanced that King Arthur went to hunt, and Peredur went also. And Peredur let loose his dog upon a hart, and the dog chased the hart and killed it. And as Peredur followed the chase he saw signs of a dwelling; and he went towards the dwelling, and when he came to it he beheld a hall, and at the door of the hall he found some strong swarthy youths playing at chess. And when he entered the hall he beheld three maidens sitting on a bench, and they were all clothed alike, and as became persons of high rank. And he went and sat by them on the bench.

One of the maidens looked at him steadfastly and her face was sad and her eyes were filled with tears. And Peredur asked her wherefore she was weeping. "Through grief," she replied, "that I should see so fair a youth as thou art slain."

"Who will slay me?" inquired Peredur.

"If thou art so daring as to remain here to-night," she answered, "I will tell thee."

"How great soever my danger may be in remaining here, I will listen to you," said Peredur.

Then the maiden said, "This palace is owned

by him who is my father, and he slays every one who comes hither without his leave.

"What sort of a man is thy father that he is able to slay every one?" asked Peredur.

"A man, I regret to say," she replied, "who does wrong unto his neighbors, and who renders justice to none."

And hereupon he saw the youths arise and clear the chessmen from the board. And he heard a great tumult; and after the tumult there came in a huge, black, one-eyed man, and the maidens arose to meet him. And they disarrayed him, and he went and sat down; and after he had rested and pondered awhile, he looked at Peredur and asked who the knight was.

"Lord," said one of the maidens, "he is the fairest, gentlest youth that ever thou didst see. And for the sake of Heaven and thine own destiny, have patience with him."

"For thy sake," he replied, "I will have patience with him and will spare his life this night."

Then Peredur came towards them to the fire, and partook of food and wine, and entered into discourse with the ladies. And being elated with the wine, he said to the black man, "It is a marvel to me, so mighty as thou sayest thou art, who could have put out thine eye."

At this the black man frowned and said, "It is one of my habits that whosoever puts to me the

question which thou hast asked, shall not escape with his life, either as a free gift or for a price."

"Lord," said the maiden, "whatsoever he may say to thee in jest and through excitement of the wine, make good that which thou didst promise just now."

"I will do so gladly for thy sake," he said; "willingly will I grant him his life this night." And that night thus they remained.

The next day the black man got up and put on his armor, and said to Peredur, "Arise, young man, and suffer death."

And Peredur said, "Do one of two things, black man; if thou wilt fight with me, either throw off thy armor, or give arms to me that I may encounter thee."

"Ha! young man," said he, "couldst thou fight if thou hadst arms? Take thou what arms thou dost choose."

And thereupon the maiden came to Peredur with such arms as pleased him; and he fought with the black man and overcame him and forced him to crave his mercy.

"Black man," said Peredur, "thou shalt have mercy, provided thou tell me who thou art, and who put out thine eye."

"Lord, I will tell thee," he replied. "I lost it in fighting with the Black Serpent of the Carn. There is a mound which is called the Mound of Mourning, and on the mound there is a carn, and in the

carn there is a serpent, and in the tail of the serpent there is a stone, and the virtues of the stone are such that whosoever should hold it in one hand, in the other he shall have as much gold as he may desire. And in fighting with this serpent was it that I lost my eye. And the Black Oppressor am I called for the reason that there is not a single man around me whom I have not oppressed."

"Tell me," said Peredur, "how far is it hence?"

"The same day that thou settest forth," he replied, "thou wilt come to the palace of the Sons of the King of Tortures; so called because the Addanc of the lake slays them once every day. And the day following thou wilt reach the Court of the Countess of Achievements. In the household of the Countess are three hundred men, and unto every one who comes to her Court the achievements of her household are related. And the day that thou goest thence thou wilt reach the Mound of Mourning; and round about the mound are the owners of three hundred tents guarding the serpent."

"Since thou hast been an oppressor so long," said Peredur, "I will cause that thou continue so no longer." So he slew him.

Then the maiden spoke, and began to converse with him. "If thou wast poor when thou camest here, henceforth thou wilt be rich through the treasure of the black man whom thou hast slain. Thou seest the many lovely maidens that there

are in this court; thou shalt have her whom thou best likest for the lady of thy love."

"Lady," replied Peredue, "I came not hither from my country to woo; but match yourselves as it liketh you with the comely youths I see. And none of your goods do I desire; for I need them not."

Then Peredur rode forward, and he came to the Palace of the Sons of the King of Tortures; and when he entered the palace he saw none but women; and they rose up and were joyful at his coming. And as they began to discourse with him he beheld a charger arrive with a saddle upon it, and a corpse in the saddle. And one of the women arose and took the corpse from the saddle and anointed it in a vessel of warm water, and placed precious balsam upon it. And the man rose up alive, and came to the place where Peredur was, and greeted him, and was joyful to see him. And two other dead men came in upon their saddles, and the maiden treated these two in the same manner as she had done the first. Then Peredur asked the chieftains wherefore it was thus. And they told him that there was an Addanc in a cave, which slew them every day. And thus they remained that night.

In the morning the youths arose to sally forth, and Peredur besought them to permit him to go with them. But they refused him saying, "If thou

shouldst be slain there, thou hast no one to bring thee back to life again."

And they rode forward and Peredur followed after them; and after they had disappeared from his sight he came to a mound, whereon sat the fairest lady he had ever beheld.

"I know thy quest," said she, "thou art going to encounter the Addanc, and he will slay thee; and that not by courage but by craft. He has a cave, and at the entrance of the cave there is a stone pillar, and he sees every one who enters, and none see him; and from behind the pillar he slays every one with a poisonous dart. But if thou wilt pledge me thy faith to love me above all women, I will give thee a stone by which thou shouldst see him when thou goest in, and he cannot see thee."

"I will by my faith," said Peredur, "for when first I beheld thee my heart went out to thee; and when I have slain the Addanc where shall I seek thee?"

"When thou seekest me," she replied, "seek towards India." And the maiden vanished, after placing the stone in Peredur's hand.

As he rode forward he came to a valley through which ran a river; and the borders of the valley are wooded, and on each side of the river were level meadows. And on one side of the river he saw a flock of white sheep, and one the other side a flock of black sheep. And whenever one of the white sheep bleated one of the black sheep would

cross over and become white; and when one of the black sheep bleated one of the white sheep would cross over and become black. And he saw a tall tree by the side of the river, one half of which was in flames from the roots to the top, and the other half was green and in full leaf. And near the tree was a youth of royal bearing sitting on a mound. Peredur saluted the youth, and the youth greeted him in return. Now there were three roads leading from the mound; two of them were wide and the third was more narrow. And Peredur inquired where the three roads went.

"One of them goes to my palace," said the youth, "and I invite thee to go with me and rest in my palace to-night, and my wife and sisters will entertain thee. The other road leads to the town wherein food and drink may be bought; and the narrow road leads towards the cave of the Addanc."

"I thank thee for thy courtesy," said Peredur, "but I cannot tarry; and with thy permission I will go that way."

So the next day Peredur set forth toward the Mound of Mourning. On his way he met a youth by the name of Etlym, who desired to go with him. So they went forward till they came in sight of the mound and the tents.

"Go unto yonder men," said Peredur to Etlym, "and desire them to come and do me homage."

So Etlym went unto them and said unto them, "Come and do homage to my lord."

"Who is thy lord," said they.

"Peredur with the long lance is my lord," said Etlym.

To this they replied, "Were it permitted to slay a messenger, thou shouldst not go back to thy lord alive, for making unto kings and earls and barons so arrogant a demand as to go and do him homage."

On this Peredur desired him to go back to them, and to give them the choice either to come and do him homage or to do battle with him. And they chose rather to do battle; and that day Peredur overthrew the owners of a hundred tents. And the next day he overthrew a hundred more; and the third day the remaining third took counsel to do homage to him. And Peredur inquired of them wherefore they were there. And they told him they were guarding the serpent until he should die. "For then should we fight for the stone among ourselves, and whoever should be conquerer among us would have the stone, and thus be able to have all the gold he wants."

"Wait here," said Peredur, "and I will go to encounter the serpent."

"No, no, lord," said they, "we will all go together to encounter the serpent that we may share the honor and the gold with thee."

But Peredur would not permit it and went alone

to encounter it. And he took the stone which the maiden had given him in his left hand and his lance in his right hand. And as he entered the cave he perceived the Addanc, and he pierced him through with his lance and cut off his head. And as he came forth from the cave, behold all the men were at the entrance; and they saluted Peredur, and told him that there was a prediction that he should slay the monster.

Then Peredur gave the head of the Addanc to the young man Etlym, and he said, "May Heaven prosper and bless thee." And in return Etlym offered him one of his three sisters in marriage, and half his kingdom with her.

But Peredur said, "I came not hither to woo, but if I took a wife, I would prefer your sister to all others whom I know."

And Peredur still rode onward; and he came to the fairest valley he had ever seen, through which ran a river; and there he beheld many tents of various colors. And he marvelled still more at the number of windmills and of watermills that he saw. And there rode up to him a tall, auburn-haired man, in a workman's garb, and Peredur inquired of him who he was.

"I am the chief miller," he said, "of all the mills yonder."

"Wilt thou give me a lodging?" said Peredur.

"I will gladly do so," replied the miller.

So Peredur came to the miller's house, and the

miller had a fair and pleasant dwelling. And Peredur asked money as a loan from the miller, that he might buy meat and bread for himself. To this the miller's wife objected; but he promised her that he would pay him ere he went thence. Then he inquired of the miller wherefore such a multitude was there assembled. And the miller said, "There is to be a tournament, and the Empress of Cristinobyl the Great is here; and she will have no one for her husband but the man who is the most valiant, for she careth not for riches. And it was impossible to bring food along for so many thousands as are here, therefore were these mills constructed."

The next day Peredur arose and equipped himself for the tournament. And among the tents he beheld one that was the fairest of them all; and in that tent he saw a beauteous maiden leaning her head out a window of the tent, and he thought he had never seen a maiden more lovely than she. And he stopped and looked upon the maiden, and as he looked he began to love her greatly.

And he remained there, gazing at the maiden from morning until midday, and from midday until evening; and then the tournament for the day was ended; and he went to his lodging and drew off his armor. And the next day he did in like manner as he had done the day before. And the third day as he was in the same place gazing on the maiden, he felt a hard blow between the neck and

the shoulder as from the edge of an axe. And when he turned and looked behind him he saw that it was the miller; and the miller said unto him, "Do one of two things; either turn thy head from hence or go to the tournament."

At this Peredur smiled upon the miller and went to the tournament, and all whom he encountered that day he overthrew. And as many as he overthrew he sent as a gift to the Empress, and their horses and their arms he sent to the miller's wife in payment of the money that he had borrowed of the miller. And the Empress sent for him to come and visit her, but Peredur went not for the first nor for the second message. And the third time she sent one hundred knights to bring him against his will; and they went to him and told him this message from the Empress. And Peredur refused to go and fought with them and defeated them and caused them to be bound and thrown into the mill dyke.

Then the Empress sought advice of a wise man; and he said "With thy permission I will go to him myself." So he came to Peredur and besought him to come and visit the Empress.

Then Peredur went with the man, and when he reached the tent of the Empress he sat down in an outer chamber, and she came and placed herself by his side; and he saw that she was the beautiful maiden he had seen in the tent; and they discoursed with each other with much courtesy.

And while they all sat thus, they beheld a black man enter with a goblet of wine in his hand. And he dropped upon his knee before the Empress, and besought her to give it to no one who would not fight for it. And she looked upon Peredur, and he said, "Lady, bestow upon me the goblet." And she gave it to him; and he drank the wine and sent the goblet to the miller's wife.

And while they thus sat talking, behold there entered a black man of larger stature than the other, with a wild beast's claw in his hand wrought into the form of a goblet, and filled with wine. And he presented it to the Empress, and besought her to give it to no one but the man who would fight with him. "Lady," said Peredur, "bestow it upon me." And she gave it to him. And Peredur drank the wine, and sent the goblet to the wife of the miller.

And while they talked, behold a rough looking crisp-haired man, taller than either of the others, came in with a bowl in his hands full of wine; and he bent upon his knees and gave it into the hands of the Empress and besought her to give it to none but him who would fight with him for it. And she gave it to Peredur, and he sent it as before to the miller's wife in return for the money the miller had loaned him.

And that night Peredur returned to his lodging; and the next day he accoutred himself and his horse and went to the meadow, and there met the

three black men and fought with them and slew them. Then he went to the tent of the Empress, and she came and took him by the hand and said to him:

"Goodly Peredur, dost thou remember the faith thou didst pledge me when I gave thee the stone, that thou mightst kill the Addanc?"

And he, gazing at her, said, "Lady, thou sayest truth, I do remember it with all my heart."

For she was the maiden who had been sitting on the mound when Peredur had gone in search of the Addanc, and had given him the stone on the pledge of his faithful love. And so he remained with her for fourteen years, as the story relates. After which he returned to the court of King Arthur.

## CHAPTER VI

### HOW PEREDUR SOUGHT THE CASTLE OF WONDERS

WHILE Peredur was at Caerleon-upon-Usk, behold there came to the palace a black curly-headed maiden, riding upon a yellow mule. Her face and hands were as black as the blackest iron covered with pitch, and her color was not more frightful than her form. Her face was long, her nose was short with distended nostrils; one eye was mottled gray and the other was black as jet and sunk deep in her head. Her teeth were long and yellow; her legs and feet were large and bony; and her back was in the shape of a crook.

Greeting King Arthur, she said, "May it please thee, lord, my dwelling is far hence in a stately castle, and therein are five hundred and sixty-six knights of the order of chivalry; and whoever would acquire fame in arms and encounters and conflicts, he will gain it there if he deserves it. And whoso would reach the summit of fame and of honor, I know where he may find it. There is a castle on a lofty mountain, and there is a maiden therein, and she is detained a prisoner there; and whoever shall set her free will attain the summit

of the fame of the world." And thereupon she rode away.

Then many of the knights, and Peredur with them, started to find the castle with the intent to release the maiden. And Peredur rode forward over the whole island seeking tidings of the black maiden, and he could meet with none. At length he came to a valley in the centre of which flowed a river. As he traversed the valley he beheld a horseman coming towards him and wearing the garments of a priest; and he besought his blessing. But the priest would not give him his blessing, but chided him that he was riding clad in armor, as it was Good Friday. To which Peredur replied, "Chide me not, for I knew not that it was Good Friday, since it is a year since I set forth from my own country."

Then he dismounted and led his horse by the bridle. Soon he came to a cross road which entered a wood; and on the other side of the wood he saw an unfortified castle. Riding up to the gate of the castle he met the priest whom he had seen before, and he asked him again for his blessing. "The blessing of Heaven be upon thee," said the priest, "for it is more fitting to travel in thy present guise than as thou wast ere while; and this night thou shalt tarry with me." So he remained there that night.

The next day Peredur sought to go forth; but the priest said, "To-day no one may journey. Thou

must stay with me to-day and to-morrow and the day following, and then I will direct thee as best I may to the place thou art seeking."

So the fourth day Peredur sought to go forth, and he entreated the priest to tell him how he should find the Castle of Wonders.

"What I know I will tell thee thereof," said the priest. "Go over yonder mountain, and on the other side of the mountain thou wilt come to a river, and in the valley wherein the river runs is a king's palace, wherein the king sojourns during Easter. And if thou mayst have tidings anywhere of the Castle of Wonders thou wilt have them there."

So Peredur rode forward until he came to the valley in which was the river, and there he met a number of men going to hunt, and in the midst of them a man of exalted rank; and Peredur saluted him. And the man replied, "Choose, chieftain, whether thou wilt go with me to the chase or proceed to my palace, where you can remain with my daughter until I return from the chase, when, whatever thy errand, such as I can obtain for thee thou shalt gladly have."

Then as Peredur preferred to go to the palace, the king sent a little yellow page with him as an attendant; and he brought him to the palace. And when he came to the palace the king's daughter saluted him joyfully, and prepared for him a repast and placed him by her side at the table. And what-

ever Peredur said to her she laughed loudly so that all the palace could hear her.

Then the little yellow page went to the king and told him that it seemed to him that the youth whom he had met was his daughter's husband, or if not that he would shortly be so unless he were cautious.

"What is thy counsel in this matter?" said the king.

"My counsel is," he replied, "that thou set strong men upon him to seize him until thou hast obtained the truth concerning him."

So the king set strong men upon Peredur, who seized him and cast him into prison. Then the maiden went before her father and asked him wherefore he had caused the youth from King Arthur's court to be imprisoned.

"In truth," he answered, "he shall not be free to-night, nor to-morrow, nor the day following, and he shall not come from where he is."

The maiden replied not to what the king had said, but went to the youth and said to him, "It is unpleasant for you to be here?"

"I should not care if I were not here," he answered.

"Well," she said, "I will provide for thee as best I can; and if it will be pleasing to thee I will watch with thee through the night."

"This I cannot refuse," said Peredur. And so she remained in the prison with him all the night.

In the morning Peredur heard a tumult in the town, and said, "Tell me, fair maiden, what is this tumult?"

"All the king's hosts and his forces have come to the town to-day," she answered.

"And what seek they here?" he inquired.

"There is an earl near this place who possesses two earldoms, and is as powerful as a king; and a tournament will take place here to-day."

"I beseech thee," said Peredur, "to cause a horse and arms to be brought, that I may view the encounter, and I will promise that I will come back to my prison again."

"Gladly," she replied, "will I provide thee with horse and arms."

So she gave him a horse and arms, and a bright scarlet robe of honor over his armor, and a yellow shield upon his shoulder. And he went to the combat, and as many of the earl's men as encountered him that day he overthrew; and at eventide he returned to his prison. And the maiden asked tidings of Peredur, but he answered her not a word.

Then the maiden went to her father and asked tidings of him, and inquired who had acquitted himself the best of the household. And he said that he knew not; but that it was a man with a scarlet robe of honor over his armor, and a yellow shield upon his shoulder. Then she smiled and returned to where Peredur was, and did him great

honor that night. And for three days did Peredur slay the earl's men; and before any one could know who he was he returned to his prison.

On the fourth day, Peredur went forth again, and he slew the earl himself. And the maiden went to her father and inquired of him the news.

"I have good news for thee," said the king; "the earl is slain, and I am the owner of his two earldoms."

"Knowest thou, lord, who slew him?" she asked.

"I do not know," said the king. "It was the knight with the scarlet robe of honor and the yellow shield."

Then she said, "My father, I know who he is."

"By Heaven!" he exclaimed, "who is he?"

"Lord," she replied, "he is the knight whom thou hast imprisoned."

Then the king went unto Peredur and saluted him, and told him that he would reward the service he had done for him in any way he might desire. And when they went to meat, Peredur was placed beside the king, and the maiden was placed on the other side of Peredur.

"I will give thee," said the king, "my daughter in marriage, and half of my kingdom with her and the two earldoms as a gift."

"Heaven reward thee," said Peredur, "but I came not here to woo."

"What seekest thou then?" asked the king.

Then Peredur told him that he was seeking for

the Castle of Wonders. At this the maiden said, "Thy enterprise, chieftain, is, I fear, greater than thou wilt wish to pursue. Nevertheless, thou shalt have tidings of the castle, and a guide through my father's dominions, and provisions for thy journey, for thou art, O chieftain, the man of all the world whom I best love."

Then she said to him that he should go over yonder mountain, and there he would find a lake, and in the middle of the lake there is a castle, and that is the castle that is called the Castle of Wonders. "And we know not what wonders are within," she said, "but thus it is called."

Then Peredur proceeded toward the castle; and when he came there he found the gate of the castle was open and he went therein. And when he came to the hall, the door was opened and he entered. And he beheld a chess-board in the hall, and the chessmen on the board were playing against one another by themselves. As he looked upon the game, behold the side that he favored lost the game, and thereupon the others set up a shout, as though they had been living men. And Peredur was wroth, and he took the chessmen in his lap, and cast the chessboard into the lake.

And when he had done this, behold a black maiden came in, and said to him, "The welcome of Heaven be not unto thee. Thou hadst rather do evil than good."

"What complaint hast thou against me?" said Peredur.

"That thou hast occasioned the Empress the loss of her chessboard which she would not have lost for all her empire. And the way in which thou mayst recover the chessboard is to repair to the Castle of Ysbydinongyl, where there is a black man who lays waste the dominions of the Empress; and if thou canst slay him, thou wilt recover the chessboard. But if thou goest there, thou wilt not return alive."

"Wilt thou direct me hither?" said Peredur.

"I will show thee the way," she replied.

So Peredur went to the Castle of Ysbydinongyl, and there he found the black man, and he fought with him and overcome him so that he cried for mercy. "Mercy will I grant thee,' said Peredur, "on condition that thou cause the chessboard to be restored to the place where it was when I entered the hall."

Then the maiden came to him and said, "The curse of Heaven be upon thee for thy work, since thou hast left that monster alive, who lays waste all the possessions of the Empress."

"I granted him his life," said Peredur, "that he might cause the chessboard to be restored."

"The chessboard is not in the place where thou didst find it; go back therefore and slay him," said the maiden.

So Peredur went back and slew the black man.

And when he returned to the palace he found the black maiden there.

"Ah! maiden," said Peredur, "where is the Empress?"

"I declare to Heaven," she replied, "that thou wilt not see her unless thou slay the monster that is in yonder forest."

"What monster is there?" asked Peredur.

"It is a stag," she said, "as swift as the swiftest bird; and he has one horn in his forehead as long as the shaft of a spear, and as sharp as whatever is sharpest. And he destroys the branches of the best trees in the forest, and kills every animal that he meets therein. And what is worse, he comes every night and drinks up the fish pond and leaves the fishes exposed so that the most of them die before the water returns again."

"Maiden," said Peredur, "wilt thou come and show me this animal?"

"Not so," said the maiden, "for he hath not permitted any mortal to enter the forest for about a twelvemonth. But here is a little dog belonging to the Empress, which will arouse the stag and chase him toward thee."

Then the little dog went as a guide to Peredur, and aroused the stag, and brought him towards the place where Peredur was. And the stag attacked Peredur with great fury; but Peredur leaped aside and let him pass by him, and as he

did so he struck him and smote off his head with his sword.

While he was looking at the head of the stag, he saw a lady on horseback coming towards him. And she took the little dog in the lappet of her cap, and the head and the body of the stag lay before her; and around the stag's neck was a golden collar.

"Ha! chieftain," she said, "uncourteously hast thou acted in slaying the fairest jewel that was in my dominions."

"I was entreated so to do," said Peredur; "and if I have done wrong, I ask is there any way by which I can atone for it and obtain thy friendship?"

"There is," she replied. "Go thou up into yonder mountain, and there thou wilt find a grove, and in the grove there is a cromlech; and there thou shalt find a man whom thou shalt challenge three times to fight. In this way canst thou have my friendship."

So Peredur went toward the mountain, and came to the grove and challenged any man to fight him. And a black man arose from beneath the cromlech, mounted upon a bony horse, and both he and his horse were clad in huge rusty armor. And there they began to fight. And as often as Peredur cast the black man to the earth, he would jump again into his saddle. Then Peredur dismounted and drew his sword; and thereupon the

black man leaped upon Peredur's horse and disappeared with his horse and his own. And Peredur in amaze went along the mountain looking for his horse; and when he reached the other side of the mountain he came to a castle, and when he entered it he saw a lame gray-headed man sitting on one side of the hall with Gawaine beside him. And there Peredur beheld his horse which the black man had taken, and in the same stall with that of Gawaine.

Then Peredur went and seated himself on the other side of the hoary-headed man. And behold a yellow haired youth came, and bent upon the knee before Peredur, and besought his friendship.

"Lord," said the youth, "it was I that came in the form of the black maiden to Arthur's court, and when thou didst throw the chessboard, and when thou didst slay the black man of Ysbydinongyl, and when thou didst slay the stag, and when thou didst go to fight the black man of the cromlech. And I came with the bloody head in the salver, and with the lance that streamed with blood from the point to the hand, all along the shaft; and the head was thy cousin's and he was killed by the sorceresses of Gloucester, who also lamed thine uncle; and I am thy cousin. And there is a prediction that thou art to avenge these things."

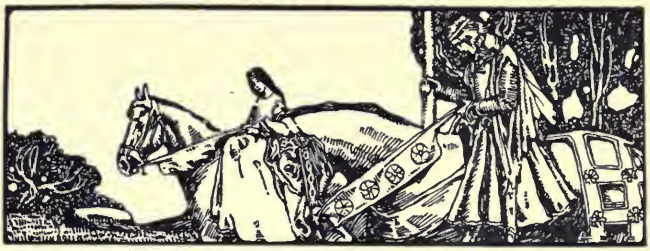
Then Peredur and Gawaine took counsel together and they sent to King Arthur and his household to beseech them to come against the

sorceresses. And the King and his knights came and began to fight with them; and one of the sorceresses slew one of King Arthur's men before Peredur's face, at which Peredur bade her forbear. And the soceress slew a man before Peredur's face a second time, and a second time he forbade her. And the third time the sorceress slew a man before the face of Peredur; and then Peredur drew his sword, and smote the sorceress on the helmet; and all her head armor was split into two parts. At this she set up a cry and warned the other sorceresses to flee, telling them that this was Peredur, the man who had learned chivalry with them, and by whom they were destined to be slain. Then King Arthur and his household fell upon the sorceresses and slew every one of them. And thus is it related of the Castle of the Wonders.

And after this Peredur went to King Arthur's court, and there it is supposed he lived for many years with his wife, the fair Angharard, beloved by the King and all his knights.

**This is a genuine Arthurian tale, though it is not included in Malory's book of "Morte de Arthur." Peredur is frequently referred to by the Bards of the Middle Ages, in eulogistic terms, showing the high esteem in which his deeds of prowess were then held.**

**There is a French version of the tale, and in some of the old romances he is celebrated under the name of Perceval, as one of those engaged in the quest of the Sangreal. Like Owain, his exploits were sung by Chrestiens de Troyes. Both of these heroes are celebrated in romances in German and other tongues of Northern Europe.**



# Geraint and Enid

## Chapter I

### How Geraint won Enid for his Bride

ONCE upon a time King Arthur held his court at Caerleon. And with him were nine kings and many earls and barons, and many noble knights of the Table Round. On Whitsuntide, as the King sat at the banquet, there entered the hall one of his foresters, who told him that he had seen in the forest a milk white stag of wondrous size and beauty. Then King Arthur sent word to all his company that they should be ready to start at break of day on the morrow to hunt the milk white stag.

Now Queen Guinevere had asked of Arthur leave to ride with the hunters to see the chase, and this he had gladly granted. But when the morning came she lay lost in pleasing dreams and did not waken so as to be ready to go with the company.

Then her maidens went to Arthur saying, "Guinevere is still sleeping; shall we awaken her that she may go with thee to the hunt?"

"Disturb her not," the King replied, "for she had rather sleep than go to see the hunting."

Then Arthur went forth and took the road to the forest and all the knights and barons went with him. After they were gone from the palace the Queen awoke and finding she had overslept herself, she called her maidens and bade them bring her two horses. When they were brought she mounted one and bidding one of her maidens to mount the other, she rode forth to follow the hunt.

As they rode through the forest they heard a sudden sound of hoofs; and looking behind them, they beheld a knight riding towards them, mounted on a horse of great size. The rider was a fair-haired youth, bare legged and of princely mien, having a golden hilted sword at his side, and wearing about his shoulders a scarf of purple with a golden apple in each corner. His horse had a stately step, quick and proud; and soon he overtook Queen Guinevere and, reining in his steed, he saluted her.

The knight was young Geraint, the son of Erbin, who was the lord of the country of Erbin. The Queen was pleased to meet the handsome young knight, and asked him to ride with her to the hunting, which he was right glad to do. So they rode till they came to the edge of the forest, and there they stood waiting to hear when the dogs should be let loose. Presently they heard a loud noise,

and looking toward the place whence it came, they beheld a dwarf riding upon a stately horse; and behind him was a lady clothed in a garment of gold brocade, and riding upon a beautiful white horse of steady and stately pace. With her was a knight clad in bright armor and mounted upon a war horse of great size.

As the Queen beheld them, she said, "Sir Geraint, knowest thou the name of that tall knight?"

"I know him not," answered Geraine, "and because of his strange helm, I cannot see his face or his features."

Then the Queen bade her maiden go and ask the dwarf who the knight was. The maiden obeyed, but when she asked the dwarf who the knight was, he would not tell her.

So the maiden said, "Since thou art so churlish as not to answer me, I will go and ask him myself."

"Thou shalt not ask him, by my faith," said the dwarf.

"Wherefore shall I not ask him?" she replied.

"Because thou art not of sufficient honor to befit thee to speak to my lord," he answered.

Then the maiden turned her horse's head towards the knight; upon which the dwarf struck her across the face with the whip that he carried in his hand, so that the blood flowed forth. At this the maiden returned to Queen Guinevere complaining of the hurt she had received.

"Very rudely has the dwarf treated thee," said

Geraint; "I will myself go to ask who the knight is." So he went to the dwarf and asked who the knight was.

"I will not tell thee," said the dwarf.

"Then I will ask him myself," said Geraint.

"That thou shalt not, by my faith," said the dwarf. And with that he struck Geraint with his whip as he had done to the woman.

At this Geraint was very wroth, and he put his hand upon the hilt of his sword; but he considered that it would be no vengeance for him to slay the dwarf and be attacked unarmed by the knight; so he returned to the queen who said he had acted wisely and discreetly. Then he said to the Queen, "Lady, I will follow him, with thy permission; and in time I shall come to a place where I may get arms so that I may encounter the knight."

"Go," said she, "but do not attack him until thou hast good arms; and I shall be very anxious concerning thee until I hear tidings of thee."

"And remember, too," she said, "if ever thou hast a bride, thou art to bring her to me, and be she the daughter of a king or a beggar from the hedge, I will clothe her for her bridal."

"If I am alive," said Geraint, "thou shalt hear tidings of me by to-morrow afternoon;" and so he departed and followed the dwarf and the knight.

The road they took was below the palace of Caerleon, and across the ford of Usk, and they went up a lofty ridge of ground until they came to

the top of it. There stood a fair town, and at the further end of it they saw a great fortress and a castle. As the knight passed through the town, all the people arose and saluted him, and bade him welcome.

As Geraint rode through the town he looked at every house to see if he could find any one from whom he might borrow a suit of armor; but he saw no one whom he knew. Every house was full of men and arms and horses; and the men were polishing their shields and burnishing their swords and washing armor and shoeing horses. And the knight and the lady and the dwarf rode up to the castle and entered it.

Geraint stood for awhile to see whether the knight would remain in the castle, and then began to look about him to see where he should lodge. At a little distance from the town he saw an old palace that had once been full noble, but was now falling into decay. He went toward the palace and found that it was approached by a bridge of marble. On the bridge he saw sitting a hoary-headed man clad in poor and tattered garments.

As Geraint stood gazing upon him, the aged man said, "Young man, wherefore art thou so thoughtful?"

"I am thoughtful," replied Geraint, "because I know not where to pass the night."

"Wilt thou abide with me?" said the aged man.

"If thou wilt thou shalt have of the best that I can give thee."

So saying he led the way into the hall, and Geraint followed him.

In the hall Geraint dismounted and left his horse; and his host took him into an upper chamber. And there he beheld an aged woman, sitting on a cushion, with old worn out garments of satin upon her; and yet it seemed to him that she must have been comely when in the bloom of youth. And beside her was a maiden, upon whom were a vest and a veil that were old and much worn. As Geraint looked upon her he thought that he had never seen a maiden more full of comeliness, grace and beauty than she.

The hoary-headed man said to the maiden, "There is no attendant for the horse of this youth but thyself."

"I will render the best service I am able," said she, "both to him and his horse."

Then she disarrayed the knight, and unsaddled his horse and gave it straw and corn. When this was done the aged man said to the maiden, "Go to the town and bring hither the best that thou canst find, both of food and of liquor."

"I will do so gladly, lord," she said. So she went her way across the bridge, and Geraint would fain have accompanied her, but the aged man would not permit.

While the maiden was away, the aged man and

woman conversed pleasantly with Geraint and told him all about the castle and the town. And as they talked the maiden returned bringing with her a youth bearing on his back a flagon of wine and the quarter of a young bullock; while in the maiden's hands and in her veil she carried a quantity of white bread.

"I could not obtain better than this," she said, "nor with better would I have been trusted."

"Surely this is good enough," said Geraint.

So the food was made ready by the maiden, who, moving to and fro, was followed by the admiring eyes of the knight. When the food was ready Geraint sat down to the table between the aged man and his wife, while the maiden waited upon them.

When they had finished eating, Geraint talked again with the aged man, and asked him to whom the palace belonged.

"Truly," said he, "it was I that built it; and to me also belonged the city and the castle thou sawest."

"Alas!" said Geraint, "how is it that thou hast lost them?"

"I lost a great earldom, as well as these," answered the aged man, "and it was in this wise: I had a nephew, the son of my brother, and I took care of his possessions; but when he came of age he demanded them of me, but I delayed awhile to comply with his request, upon which he made

war upon me, and took from me not only his own but also all that I possessed except the castle."

"Good sir," said Geraint, "wilt thou tell me wherefore came the knight, the lady, and the dwarf, that I just now saw go into the castle; and also why there is such preparation and putting of arms in order in the town?"

"I will do so," said the aged man. "The preparations are for a tournament that is to be held to-morrow by the young earl, my nephew. In the midst of a meadow hard by two silver forks will be set up, and upon the silver forks a silver rod will be placed, and upon the silver rod will be hung a silver sparrow hawk, and that is to be the prize of a tournament to be held to-morrow. To this tournament will go all the array that thou didst see in the city, of men and of horses and of arms. And with each man will go his lady that he loves best; and no man may joust for the sparrow hawk, except the lady that he loves best be with him. And the knight thou sawest has now gained the sparrow hawk these two years; and if he wins it to-morrow they will from that time forth send it to him every year, and he himself will come here no more. And he will be called the Knight of the Sparrow Hawk from that time forward."

Then Geraint told the aged earl, whose name was Uniel, of the quest he was on, and of the insult which the knight's dwarf had given to him, and to Queen Guinevere; and he said,

"What is thy counsel to me on account of the insult to the queen and to myself?"

"It is not easy to counsel thee," said the earl, "because thou hast neither dame nor maiden with thee for whom thou canst joust, and in this tournament no man may tilt unless the lady he loves best be there. Yet I have arms here which thou couldst have, and there is my horse also if he seem to thee better than thine own."

"Ah, sir," said Geraint, "may Heaven reward thee; but my own horse to which I am accustomed will serve me best; however, I will take thy arms, as I have none of my own. And if thou wilt permit me to-morrow to challenge for this fair maiden, your daughter, I will engage, if I come alive from the tournament, to love her as long as I live."

"Gladly will I permit this," said the aged man; "and since the tournament will begin at daybreak, it will be best that we now take our needed rest."

Glad was the maiden when she heard these words, though she concealed the feeling in her heart, for Geraint was a right comely knight, and was ever courteous to ladies. Then as it was needful to be at the tournament at daybreak the next morning, they all lay down to rest.

At early morning, before the dawn, they all arose and arrayed themselves, and by the time that it was day they were all four in the meadow. And there was the Knight of the Sparrow Hawk making the proclamation and asking his lady-love

to take the sparrow hawk, because she was the fairest, and if any denied her, by force he would defend it for her.

"Take it not," said Geraint, "for there is here a maiden who is fairer and more noble, and more comely, and who has a better claim to it than thou hast."

Then said the knight to Geraint, "If thou maintainest the sparrow hawk to be due to thy lady, come forward and do battle with me."

At this Geraint went forward to the top of the meadow, he and his horse being arrayed in the Earl Uniel's old armor, which was heavy and rusty and of uncouth shape. And he and the knight rode together several times and broke their lances upon each other, and at last the Knight of the Sparrow Hawk seemed to be gaining the mastery; and there was shouting and joy and mirth amongst his followers.

Then the old earl drew near to Geraint and said, "O knight, since no other lance will hold with thee, here is the good spear which was in my hand on the day when I received the honor of knighthood, and it never yet has been broken."

Geraint took the spear with thanks; upon which the dwarf also brought a lance to his lord, saying, "Behold, here is a lance for thee, not less good than his. And bethink thee that no knight has ever withstood thee so long as this one has done."

Then Geraint pricked his horse and rode upon

the knight so furiously that he cleft his shield in two, and broke his armor, and burst his girths, so that both he and his saddle were borne to the ground. And Geraint dismounted quickly, and drew his sword, and rushed fiercely upon him; but the knight also arose and drew his sword against Geraint. So they fought on foot with their swords, giving such heavy blows that the fire flashed from their armor like stars, and the blood and sweat ran down into their eyes.

After awhile it seemed as if the stranger knight would prevail, at which the young earl and all his party rejoiced; but Earl Uniel and his wife and the maiden were heavy of heart.

Then the old earl went near to Geraint and cried, "O knight, bethink thee of the insult that thou and Queen Guinevere had from the dwarf."

At this Geraint put forth all his strength and struck the knight so hard a blow upon his helmet that it broke, and the sword cut through the flesh and skin, even to the skull.

Then the knight fell upon his knees, and threw his sword from his hand, and besought mercy from Geraint, saying, "Unless I have time to commit myself to Heaven for my sins, and to talk with a priest, thy mercy will avail me little."

"I will grant thee mercy upon one condition," Geraint replied, "that thou go to King Arthur's court and make amends to Queen Guinevere for the insult that was offered her by thy dwarf. As

for the insult to me, for that I have myself taken amends."

"This will I gladly do," said the knight, "and who art thou?"

"I am Geraint, the son of Erbin. And declare thou also who thou art."

"I am Ederyn, the son of Nudd," he replied.

Then he leaped upon his horse and rode sadly forward to Arthur's court, his lady and his dwarf going with him.

Then came the young earl with forty honorable knights to Geraint and saluted him and bade him come to his castle; but Geraint said he would lodge that night where he had lodged before; and so he returned with Earl Uniel and his wife and daughter to the old palace.

When they reached the chamber they found there many servants and attendants whom the young earl had sent to put the house in order, and with large stores of provisions they set out a feast in the great hall. They also brought fine garments for Uniel and the women; but Geraint entreated that the maiden should be dressed in her vest and veil in which he had first seen her, until she came to the court of King Arthur to be clad in such garments as Queen Guinevere might choose for her. So the maiden arrayed herself in the garments which she had on when Geraint first saw her.

Then they all sat down to the feast, and in the

highest places were Geraint, the young earl, the old earl and his wife, and the maiden, whose name was Enid. So they feasted and had good cheer.

When the feast was over, the young earl asked Geraint to visit him the next day; but Geraint refused, saying that he must go to the court of King Arthur with the maiden on the morrow.

"I go," he said, "to seek aid for Earl Uniel, who is in great trouble, having lost his possessions."

"Ah, chieftain," said the young earl, "it is my fault that Earl Uniel is without his possessions; and with regard to the disagreement between him and me, I will gladly abide by thy counsel, and agree to what thou mayst judge right between us."

"Then," said Geraint, "I but ask thee to restore to him what is his, and what he should have received from the time he lost his possessions even until this day."

"That will I gladly do for thee," said the young earl.

"Then," said Geraint, "whosoever is here who owes homage to Uniel, let him come forward, and perform it on the spot."

And all the men did so; and by that treaty they abided. And his castle and his town, and all his possessions were restored to Uniel. And he received back all that he had lost, even to the smallest jewel.

Then spoke Earl Uniel to Geraint, saying, "Oh, Knight, behold the maiden for whom thou didst

challenge at the tournament; thou hast won her, and gladly I bestow her upon thee."

"She shall go with me," said Geraint, "to the court of King Arthur, and there will we be wedded with all ceremony."

Then Enid with heart full of sweet and modest thoughts, cast her eyes upon her faded dress and thought it never yet had looked so mean. "If he would but tarry for a day or two, I would work until my eyes were dim," she said to herself, "to array myself so that I should not discredit him."

And thus she fell to longing for a dress that her mother had given her some three years before, but which had been lost on the unhappy night when they had been driven from their palace. As she thus mused, lo! her mother came to her with the self same dress, which the young earl had restored to her, at which Enid's heart was full of joy.

On the morrow when she rose she arrayed herself in this costly dress, proud to have Geraint see her thus appareled. But Geraint when he saw her, said, "Not in this costly robe, but in the simple dress in which first I saw thee; for our great Queen hath made me promise that whatever bride I brought, she herself would clothe her in the raiment that she chose."

Then Enid, silently, her mother silent also as she aided her, laid aside the costly robe and robed herself in her plain and much worn suit again, and came to Geraint, who as he saw her gave her a

kindly greeting, his heart being full of love for her. At this her mother smiled for joy, though half in tears, and wrapped her in a mantle, and pressed a parting kiss upon her brow. Then mounting their steeds, Enid rode with Geraint toward King Arthur's court.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW GERAINT CAME TO THE COURT OF ARTHUR

IN THE meantime Arthur rode forward in pursuit of the white stag. The men were divided into hunting parties, and the dogs were let loose upon the stag. The last dog that was let loose was the favorite dog of Arthur; Cavall was his name. So fleet was he that he left all the other dogs behind him, and soon reached and turned the stag. At the second turn, the stag came toward the hunting party of King Arthur; and when Arthur espied the stag he set upon him, and killed him and cut off his head. Then they sounded the death horn, and all the hunters came riding in and gathered around the dead stag.

Then came Kadyriaith to King Arthur and said to him, "Behold, my lord, yonder is Queen Guinevere, and no one with her save only one maiden."

At this King Arthur said, "Command Gildas, the son of Caw, and all the scholars of the court to attend Queen Guinevere to the palace." And so they did.

Then they all set forth again, holding converse together concerning the head of the stag, to whom it should be given. One wished it should be given

to the lady best beloved by him and another to the lady whom he loved best; and so as they talked about the matter they came to the palace.

When Arthur and Guinevere heard them disputing about the head of the stag, Guinevere said to the King, "My lord, this is my counsel concerning the stag's head; let it not be given away until Geraint, the son of Erbin, shall return from the errand he is upon."

And Guinevere told Arthur what that errand was; and when he heard it he said, "Right gladly shall it be so." And thus it was settled.

The next day Guinevere caused a watch to be set upon the ramparts to look for Geraint's coming. And after midday they beheld an unhappy little man upon a horse, and after him a dame or a damsel also on horseback, and after her a knight of large stature bowed down, and hanging his head low and sorrowfully, and clad in broken and worthless armor.

As they came to the gate, one of the watch went to Guinevere and told her what kind of people they saw, and what aspect they bore.

"I know not who they are," said he.

"But I know," said Guinevere; "this is the knight whom Geraint pursued; and methinks he comes not here of his own free will; but Geraint has overtaken him, and avenged the insult to the maiden to the uttermost."

And thereupon, behold, a porter came to the

place where Guinevere was, and said, "Lady, at the gate there is a knight, and I never saw a man of so pitiful an aspect to look upon as he. The armor that he wears is miserable and broken, and the stain of blood upon it is more conspicuous than its own color."

"Knowest thou his name?" said she.

"I do," he replied; "he tells me that he is Edeyrn, the son of Nudd."

Then she replied, "I know him not."

So Guinevere went to the gate to meet him; and as she saw his sad plight she could not but pity him, even though the churlish dwarf was with him. Then he saluted Guinevere and told her all that had befallen him, and what Geraint had done, and that Geraint had compelled him to come hither and do the Queen's pleasure for the insult he had done to the maiden.

Then Arthur came to them, and gazing a long time upon the knight, asked him if he was not Edeyrn, the son of Nudd, to which the knight replied that he was. He then told Arthur all his adventure.

"Well," said Arthur, "from what I hear, it behooves Queen Guinevere to be merciful towards thee."

To which Queen Guinevere replied, "The mercy which thou desirest, my lord, will I grant him, since it is as insulting to thee that an insult should be offered to me as to thyself."

"This will be best," said Arthur; "and now let him have medical care to see whether he may live."

So it was settled that he should be put in charge of the leeches, and when he was recovered, should give such satisfaction to the Queen as the knights of the Round Table might judge to be fitting.

The next day came Geraint to Caerleon, and as they saw him coming with the maiden clad in white, Queen Guinevere commanded to assemble all the women to welcome them and wish them joy. And when Geraint came to the place where Guinevere was, he saluted her.

"Heaven prosper thee," said the queen, "and welcome to thee. And Heaven reward thee that thou hast so proudly avenged my wrong."

To which Geraint replied, "Lady, it was my desire to obtain satisfaction for thee according to thy will; and behold here is the maiden through whom thou hadst thy revenge."

"Verily," said Guinevere, "the welcome of Heaven be unto her; and it is fitting that we should receive her joyfully."

Then came King Arthur and welcomed him also with many words of praise saying, "Heaven protect thee, and the welcome of Heaven be unto thee. And since Edeyrn, the son of Nudd, has received his overthrow and wounds from thy hands, thou hast had a prosperous career."

"It was his fault through his arrogance that we

fought, and I would not quit him until one of us was vanquished," replied Geraint.

"But where is the maiden," inquired Arthur, "for whom I heard thou didst give challenge?"

"She is gone with Guinevere to her chamber," Geraint replied.

Then Arthur went to see the maiden; and he and all the court gave her a right glad welcome. The Queen attired her in some of her own rich raiment, and they all said that they had never seen any one who was more beautiful than she.

Soon after this, Enid and Geraint were wedded with all ceremony, Arthur giving away the maiden to the knight. And that day and the night were spent in minstrelsy, and with ample gifts of wine and a multitude of games. And when the hour of rejoicing was over they found a bridal chamber had been provided for them in the chamber of the King and Queen.

And so they took up their abode in the palace. And Enid had many companions, both men and women; and there was no maiden more esteemed than she in all the Island of Britain.

Meantime the Queen reminded them of the head of the stag which Arthur had slain, saying that here is a fit occasion for bestowing it. "Let it be given," she said, "to Enid, the daughter of Uniel, the most illustrious maiden. No one will begrudge it to her, I know, for between her and

every one here there exists nothing but love and friendship."

This was much applauded by them all, and especially by the king. So the head of the stag was given to Enid; and thereupon her fame increased and her friends became more in number than before. And Geraint and Enid abode in the palace for three years. And Geraint won great honors in jousting and hunting, and his fame spread over the face of the kingdom.

## CHAPTER III

### HOW GERAINT RETURNED FROM CORNWALL

NOW as King Arthur was holding court at Caerleon, behold there came ambassadors, wise and prudent, and full of knowledge and eloquence of speech, and they saluted the King.

"Heaven prosper you," said King Arthur, "and the welcome of Heaven be unto you! And whence do you come?"

"We come," they said, "from Cornwall, being ambassadors of King Erbin, thy uncle; and our mission is unto thee. Thy uncle is growing old and waxes heavy and feeble; and the neighboring chiefs knowing this, grow insolent towards him, and covet his lands and possessions. Wherefore he earnestly beseeches thee to permit Geraint, his son, to return to him to protect his possessions; it being better for him to spend the flower of his youth and the prime of his age in preserving his own boundaries, than in tournaments in which there is no profit, although he obtains glory in them."

"Well," said King Arthur, "go and divest yourselves of your armor and refresh yourselves after

your fatigue; and before you go forth hence you shall have an answer."

So they went to eat.

Now King Arthur was much grieved to think of letting Geraint depart from him and his court, though he did not think it fair that he should be kept from going to protect his own dominions, seeing that his father was unable to do so. No less was the grief and regret of Queen Guinevere, and of all her women, and all her damsels, through fear that Enid would leave them.

Then Arthur told Geraint the cause of the mission, and of the request of the ambassadors to him from Cornwall. And Geraint said, "Truly, be it my advantage or otherwise, I will do in this matter according to thy will."

To this the King replied, "Though it grieves me to part with thee, it is my counsel that thou listen to the request of thy father, and go to protect thy possessions. And thou mayst take with thee as many as thou wilt of those thou lovest among my faithful ones, and among thy friends, and among thy companions in arms."

"Heaven reward thee, noble King, for thy goodness to me," said Geraint, "and what thou advisest that will I do."

The Queen, hearing of the ambassadors and the talk of Arthur and Geraint, said, "What is this discourse I hear between you? Is it of those who are to conduct Geraint to his country?"

"It is," said the King.

"Then it is needful for one to consider," said she, "concerning companions and a provision for the lady that is with me."

"Thou wilt do well," said Arthur, "in doing so."

The next day the ambassadors were permitted to depart, being told that Geraint would soon follow them. On the third day Geraint and Enid set forth, and many brave knights and beautiful women went with them. Never was there seen a fairer host journeying toward the Severn.

Now upon the other side of the Severn were the nobles of Erbin with his foster father at their head, who came to welcome Geraint, and many women of the court, with his mother, came to receive Enid, his wife.

And there was great rejoicing and gladness throughout the whole court, and throughout all the country, concerning Geraint, because of their love for him, and the greatness of the fame which he had gained since he went from amongst them; and because he had now returned to take possession of his dominions and to preserve his boundaries.

And so they came to court. And in the court they had ample entertainment, and a multitude of gifts, and an abundance of wine, and a variety of minstrelsy and games. And to do honor to Geraint, all the chief men of the country were invited

to visit him; and they passed that day and that night in the utmost enjoyment.

At dawn next day, Erbin arose and summoned to him Geraint, and the noble persons who had borne him company. And he said to Geraint, "I am a feeble and aged man, and whilst I was able to maintain the dominion for thee and for myself I did so. But thou art young and in the flower of thy youth. Henceforth do thou preserve my possessions."

"Truly," said Geraint, "with my consent thou shalt not give the power over thy dominions at this time into my hands, and thou shalt not take me from Arthur's court."

"Into thy hands will I give them," said Erbin; "and this day also shalt thou receive the homage of thy subjects."

Now while Geraint thought upon his father's words, Gawaine, one of the knights of King Arthur who had accompanied him, said, "It were better for thee to satisfy those who have boons to ask to-day, and to-morrow thou canst receive the homage of thy dominions."

So all that had boons to ask were summoned into one place. And every one, as requested, asked that which he desired. And the followers of Arthur began to make gifts; and immediately the men of Cornwall came and they made gifts also. And they were not long in giving, so eager was everyone to bestow gifts. And of those who

came to ask gifts, not one departed unsatisfied; and the day and night were spent in utmost enjoyment.

The next day, at dawn, Erbin desired Geraint to send messengers to the men to ask them whether it was pleasing to them that he should come to receive their homage, and whether they had anything to object to him. So Geraint sent ambassadors to the men of Cornwall to ask them this. And they all said that it would be the fulness of joy and honor to them for Geraint to come and receive their homage. So he received the homage of all those who were there.

And the day after, the followers of Arthur intended to return to Caerleon. But Geraint said, "It is too soon for you to go away yet; stay with me until I have finished receiving the homage of my chief men, who have agreed to come to me."

And so they tarried with him until all the people had paid their homage to Geraint, and then they took their departure to their own country. And Geraint went with them to bear them company, and Enid also, as far as Diganhwy, and there they parted.

As soon as they were gone, Ondyaw, the son of the Duke of Burgundy, said to Geraint, "Go now, and visit the uttermost parts of thy dominions, and see well to the boundaries of thy territories; and

if thou hast any trouble respecting them, send unto us thy companions."

"Heaven reward thee!" said Geraint. "And this which thou advisest will I do."

So Geraint journeyed to the uttermost parts of his dominions; and experienced guides and the chief men of his country went with him. And the furthermost point that they showed him he kept possession of; and he won his people's love and he had great fame throughout the land.

## CHAPTER IV

### HOW ENID AND GERAINT BECAME UNHAPPY

AND now Geraint ruled in his father's place, and all the land was at peace. He held tournaments as at Arthur's court, and met many valiant and mighty men, until he had gained as much fame there as he had formerly done elsewhere. He enriched his court, and his companions, and his nobles, with the best horses and the best arms, and with the best and most valuable jewels, and he ceased not until his fame had flown over the face of the whole kingdom. But after a while he grew tired of these sports, and began to love ease and pleasure. And on account of his great love for Enid, he spent all his time with her in the palace with minstrelsy and diversions, and neglected knightly sports and the company of his nobles, insomuch that he began to lose the hearts of the people. And there was murmuring and scoffing concerning him among the people of the palace.

Now when Erbin heard of these things, he spoke to Enid and asked her whether it was she who had caused Geraint to leave his sports and forsake his people and his hosts.

"Not I, by my confession unto Heaven," she replied, "for there is nothing more hateful unto me than this."

And she knew not what she should do, for although it was hard for her to tell her thoughts to Geraint, yet was it not more easy for her to listen to what she heard, without warning Geraint concerning it. And she was very sorrowful.

One morning in the summer time, as they were lying on the couch in their chamber, Enid was awake, but Geraint slept. The clothes had slipped from off his arm and breast, and as she gazed upon his manly beauty she exclaimed, "Alas! am I the cause that these arms and this breast have lost their glory, and the warlike fame they once so richly enjoyed! If so I cannot be a true wife to him."

As she thus spoke, the tears dropped from her eyes and fell on her husband's breast, so that he awoke. Hearing her closing words but imperfectly, and seeing her in tears, the thought entered his mind that she loved some other man more than himself, and wished for other society.

Thereupon Geraint was troubled in his mind, and springing quickly from his couch, he called his squire and bade him get ready his horse and arms.

"And do thou arise," he sternly said to Enid, "and apparel thyself in the worst riding dress thou hast in thy possession, and cause thy horse to be

As she spoke the tears dropped from her eyes on her husband's breast:

got ready; and evil betide me if we return here until thou knowest whether I have lost my strength so completely as thou didst say. If that be so, then will it be easy for thee to seek the society of him of whom thou wast thinking."

So Enid arose, and clothed herself in her meanest garments, in the faded silk in which he had first seen her and loved her so well; but she said, "I know nothing of thy meaning, my lord."

"Neither wilt thou know at this time," he answered roughly.

Then Geraint went to Erbin, and told him he was going on a quest, and it was uncertain when he would return. And when Erbin asked him who would accompany him he said that only one person would go with him, but did not tell him who that person was. Then he mounted his horse and rode forth with Enid, charging her to ride on before him, and whatever she might hear or see, not to turn back or speak to him unless he first spoke to her. The road which he chose was wild and beset with thieves and robbers and vicious animals.

As they thus rode, he was saying to himself how he had wasted time on her to keep her true and yet had failed; while she was ever praying the sweet heavens to save her dear lord from every danger, and casting about in her mind to know the reason of this statement, and wherein she had failed in her duty toward him.

They thus rode on until they came to a high road which led them into a vast forest.

Soon Enid, who rode on before, saw four armed horsemen lying in wait, and heard one of them say to the others, "Here is a good occasion for us to capture two horses and armor, and a lady likewise; for we can easily master yonder knight who hangs his head so pensively and heavily."

When Enid heard this she knew not what to do, for Geraint had charged her not to speak to him. "Yet," she said to herself, "I would rather have my death from his hand than from that of any other, and though he slay me yet will I speak to him rather than endure the misery of seeing him slain."

So she waited for Geraint until he came near to her; and then she said kindly, "My lord, did you hear the words of those men concerning thee?"

At this Geraint raised his eyes and looked at her angrily, and said, "Did I not bid thee hold thy peace? I only wish for silence, and not warning. And though thou shouldst desire to see me slain by these men, yet do I feel no dread."

Then the foremost of the robbers couched his spear, and rushed against Geraint, who received the stroke against his shield, and thrust his own lance through the other's body. At this the other robbers, one after another, rushed upon him, but he slew them as he did the first. He then dismounted and took the arms of the men he had

slain and placed them on their saddles and tied together the reins of the horses. Then he mounted his horse again, and bade Enid to ride before him and drive the horses; and again he forbade her to speak to him unless he first spoke to her.

In that manner they went through the forest, and then came out on a vast plain, across which Enid saw three armed knights coming toward them; and she heard them say that it would be easy to take all the spoil from one dolorous knight. Again was Enid full of fear for Geraint, and she turned back and waited until Geraint came up to her, and warned him of the purpose of the three knights.

At which Geraint with angry voice and frowning brow, said, "I declare to Heaven that all they can do to me is less grievous to me than that thou wilt not be silent as I bid thee."

"My lord," she answered meekly, "I feared lest they should surprise thee unawares."

"Hold thy peace, then," replied Geraint, "for I desire thy silence."

Straightway the three knights fell upon Geraint, but they fared no better than the others had done, for he slew them all, and added their arms and horses to the other spoil which was in Enid's charge, and bade her ride before him and keep silence.

And the lady went on with the horses be-

fore her, and she pursued her way straight onwards. And at a great distance from them they beheld a wood, and they could see neither end nor boundary to the wood, except on that side that was nearest to them, and they went towards it. And there came riding out of the wood five horsemen, mounted upon large and powerful chargers. And when they drew near to them, Enid heard them say, "Behold, here is a fine booty coming to us, which we shall obtain easily without labor, for we shall have no trouble in taking all those horses and arms, and the lady also, from yonder single knight so doleful and sad."

Sorely grieved was the lady upon hearing this discourse so that she knew not in the world what she should do. At last she determined to warn Geraint, and so she turned her horse's head towards him, and told him what she had heard.

Angrily and bitterly did Geraint smile upon her, and he said, "Thee do I hear doing everything that I forbade thee; but it may be that thou wilt repent this yet."

And immediately the men met them and rode upon Geraint to overthrow him; but he overcame them all five. And he placed the five suits of armor upon the five saddles, and tied together the reins of the twelve horses, and gave them in charge of Enid, saying, "I know not what good it is for me to order thee; but this time I charge

thee in an especial manner not to speak to me again."

So the lady went forward towards the wood, keeping in advance of Geraint and driving the horses, as he had bidden her to do; and it grieved him as much as his wrath would permit to see a maiden so illustrious as she and one he loved so dearly, having so much trouble with the care of the horses. In time they reached the wood, and it was both deep and vast, and while in this wood the night overtook them.

"Ah, my lady," said he, "it is in vain to attempt to go any further to-night."

To which she gently answered, "Well, my lord, whatever thou wishest we will do."

"It will be best for us," he answered, "to turn out of the wood, and to rest and wait for the day, in order to pursue our journey."

"That will we gladly," she replied. And so they did.

Having dismounted himself he took her down from her horse. As he lay down to rest he said to Enid, "While I cannot refrain from sleep through weariness, do thou watch the horses and sleep not."

"I will, my lord," she replied.

Then he went to sleep in his armor; and thus passed the night, which was not long at that season. When Enid saw the dawn appear, she looked

around to see if he were waking, and thereupon he awoke.

"My lord," she said, "I have desired to awake thee for some time."

Then he arose and said to her, "Take the horses and ride forward and keep straight on as thou didst yesterday."

So they rode on until they came to an open country with meadows in which mowers were mowing the grass. And before them was a river, and as they rode into it their horses bent down their heads and drank the water. As they went up out of the river by a lofty steep there met them a tender stripling who asked them whither they were journeying. And when Geraint had told him, he took them to the town, which was a fair city, and found them pleasant lodgings, and then went to tell the earl of the place of his adventures.

"Go to the knight," said the earl, "and say to him that I will gladly receive him into my palace."

So the youth went to Geraint and told him that the earl would gladly receive him into his palace; but Geraint said that he would rather go to his own lodgings. He had a goodly chamber, in which was plenty of straw, and drapery, and a spacious and commodious place he had for horses; and the youth prepared for them plenty of provender.

After they had disarrayed themselves, Geraint said to Enid, "Go to the other side of the chamber and come not to this side of the house, and thou

mayest call to thee the woman of the house, if thou wilt."

"I will do, my lord," said Enid, "as thou dost request."

And after they had eaten and drank they went to sleep.

The next day the earl to whom the city belonged, came to visit Geraint, bringing with him twelve honorable knights. The name of the earl was Earl Durm. And he asked Geraint the object of his journey, to which Geraint replied that it was to seek adventures and follow his own inclinations. Then the earl cast his eye upon Enid, and he looked at her steadfastly; and he thought he had never seen a maiden fairer or more comely than she, and he set his thoughts and affections upon her. Then he asked of Geraint, "Have I thy permission to go and converse with yonder maiden, for I see that she is apart from thee."

"Thou hast it gladly," replied Geraint.

So the earl went to Enid and said, "Fair maiden, it cannot be pleasant to thee to journey with yonder man."

"It is not unpleasant for me to journey with him," she replied.

"But thou hast neither youths nor maidens to serve thee," he said.

"Truly," she replied, "it is more pleasant for me to follow yonder man, than to be served by youths and maidens."

As he thus talked with her, he became inflamed with her beauty, and he said, "Listen to my counsel; all my earldom will I give thee if thou wilt dwell with me."

"That will I not," she answered, "for yonder man was the first to whom my faith was ever pledged; and shall I prove inconstant to him?"

"Thou art foolish," the earl replied; "for if I slay thy lord I can take thee with me even against thy will, and when I am tired of thee, can turn thee away. But if thou wilt go with me of thine own good will, I swear that I will remain true to thee as long as I may live."

Then Enid took counsel with herself how she might save her lord even if she might seem to encourage the earl's desires. So she said to the earl, "Then to save me from needless reproach, come here to-morrow and take me away as though I knew nothing of the matter."

To this he assented gladly, and took his leave. And she told not then Geraint of the conversation she had had with the earl, lest it should rouse his anger and bring him into danger. So they both went to sleep; but at midnight she arose and placed all Geraint's armor together so that it might be ready to put on. And then in fear she came to the side of Geraint's bed, and spake to him softly and gently, saying, "My lord, arise, and clothe thyself, for these were the words of the earl

to me, and his intention concerning me." So she told Geraint all that had passed.

And although he seemed very wroth with her for speaking, yet he took warning and armed himself while she lighted a candle that he might have light to do so. Then he told her to put down the candle and call the man of the house to come to him. And he asked the man how much he owed him, to which the man said that the sum was little; but Geraint gave him all the horses and the armor that he had taken from the robbers, asking only of the man that he should guide him out of the town by a different way from that by which they entered it. To this the man agreed, and went with him as far as was desired. Then Geraint bade the lady ride before him, as heretofore, and the host returned home.

The host had just reached his house when behold, the greatest tumult approached that was ever heard. And when he looked out, he saw four score knights in complete armor around the house, with the Earl Durm at their head.

"Where is the knight that was here?" said the earl.

"By thy hand," said he, "he went hence some time ago."

"Wherefore, villain," said he, "didst thou let him go without informing me?"

"My lord, thou didst not command me to do so, else would I not have allowed him to depart."

"What way dost thou think he took?"

"I know not, except that he went along the high road."

Then they turned their horses' heads that way, and seeing the tracks of the horses upon the high road, they followed. Enid was fearful as she rode along that they might be pursued by the wicked earl. As the morning dawned she looked behind her, and saw vast clouds of dust coming nearer and nearer to her. And thereupon she became uneasy, and she thought it was the earl and his hosts coming after them.

"By my faith," she said, "I must speak to my lord, for though he slay me, it were better for me to receive my death at his hands than to see him killed without warning him."

So she turned to her lord and said, "My lord, seest thou yonder man hastening after thee, and many others with him?"

"I do see him," said he, "and, in despite of all my orders, I see that thou wilt never keep silence."

Still he turned his horse and met the knights, and every knight who came up he overthrew. The earl assailed him last and they fought a long time; but at last Geraint struck him so hard a blow with his lance upon the center of his shield that he split his shield and threw him from his horse to the ground, and so hard was his fall that for awhile he was senseless. As soon as he revived he cried for mercy, the which Geraint granted him.

Then Geraint and Enid pursued their journey, and they came to a valley with a river running through it, over which was a bridge. And on the other side of the river they saw a walled town, one of the finest they had ever seen. As they approached the bridge they met a knight mounted upon a large and spirited steed, and Geraint asked him to whom the valley and the town belonged. He answered that they were in the hands of a perilous knight that was called the Little King.

Then the knight warned him not to cross the bridge unless he wished to combat with the Little King. "And if thou dost so," he said, "thou wilt probably meet with shame and disgrace for thy daring."

But Geraint would not be turned from his purpose; so he rode on over the bridge and Enid with him. On the other side he saw a knight that was very small of stature mounted on a great war horse broad-chested and full of spirit. And both he and the horse were completely armed.

Seeing Geraint, he said, "Tell me, knight, is it through ignorance or presumption that you seek to insult me and infringe my rules?"

"Nay," said Geraint, "I knew not that this road was forbid to any."

"Thou didst know it," said the other. "Therefore come with me now to my court, and give me satisfaction."

"That will I not," said Geraint. "I would not go

even to thy lord's court, excepting Arthur was thy lord."

"By the hand of Arthur himself," said the knight, "I will have satisfaction of thee here or receive my overthrow at thy hands."

With that the Little King rode upon Geraint and they fought together a long time on their horses, and they gave each other so many hard and severe strokes that their shields lost all their color. And it was exceedingly difficult for Geraint to strike the Little King because he was so small of stature; but at last he gave him a fair stroke and threw him headlong to the ground. Then they drew their swords and fought on foot, and gave each other many painful wounds, so that their helmets were pierced, and their skull caps were broken, and the light of their eyes was darkened with blood.

At length Geraint became enraged, and called to him all his strength, and struck the other so fierce a blow that it shattered his helmet and wounded him in the head even to the bone. Then the Little King dropped his sword and besought Geraint that he would have mercy and compassion on him. This Geraint granted on condition that the Little King should always be his ally, and consent to come to his assistance if ever it was needed. To this the Little King willingly pledged himself; and then he begged Geraint to come to his court, so that he might recover from his fa-

tigue; but to this Geraint would not consent, but insisted on continuing on his journey, though he was sorely wounded. So he mounted his horse in pain and all covered with blood. And the lady went on first, and they proceeded towards the wood which they saw before them.

## CHAPTER V

### HOW GERAINT MET ARTHUR AND GAWAINE

WHEN they had ridden a little while, Geraint's wounds began to pain more than at first; and to escape the heat of the sun, which was very great, he went into a wood and stood under a tree. Enid followed him in silence and stood not far away under another tree.

Suddenly they heard the sound of horns and a great noise of clashing arms; and as they looked they saw that the reason for the noise was that Arthur and his knights and ladies of the court were come into the woods. And while Geraint was considering which way he should go to avoid them, behold he was espied by a foot-page, who was an attendant on the steward of the household; and he went to the steward, Sir Kay, and told him of what kind of man he had seen in the wood. Then the steward caused his horse to be saddled, and he took his lance and his shield, and went to the place where Geraint was.

"Ah, knight!" said Kay, "what dost thou here?"

"I am standing under a shady tree to avoid the heat and the rays of the sun," replied Geraint.

"Wherefore is thy journey," asked Kay, "and who art thou?"

"I seek adventures, and I go where I list."

"Indeed," said Kay, "then come with me to see Arthur, who is here hard by."

"That will I not, by Heaven!" said Geraint.

"Thou must needs come," said Kay.

Then Geraint knew who it was, though Kay did not know Geraint. And Kay attacked Geraint as best he could. At this Geraint became wroth, and he struck him with the shaft of his lance, so that he rolled headlong to the ground. But chastisement worse than this he would not inflict on him.

Terrified and wild Kay arose, and he mounted his horse and went back to his lodging. And thence he proceeded to the tent of Gawaine saying, "O, sir! I was told by an attendant that there is in the wood a wounded knight, having a battered armor; and if thou dost right, thou wilt go and see if this be true."

"I care not if I do," said Gawaine. So he took his spear and shield and mounted his horse and came to the place where Geraint was.

"Sir knight," said Gawaine, "wherefore is thy journey?"

"I journey for my own pleasure, and to seek the adventures of the world."

"Wilt thou tell me who thou art? Or wilt thou come and visit Arthur, who is near at hand?"

"I will make no alliance with thee, nor will I go

to visit Arthur," said he. And he knew it was Gawaine, but Gawaine knew not that he was Geraint.

"I purpose not to leave thee," said Gawaine, "till I know who thou art." And he charged him with his lance, and struck him on his shield, so that the shaft was shivered into splinters, and their horses were front to front. Then Gawaine gazed fixedly upon him and he knew him.

"Ah, Geraint!" said he, "is it thou that art here?"

"I am not Geraint," said the knight, who with the pain of his wounds and the agony of his mind, divided between jealousy of Enid and sorrow and love, was well nigh out of his wits.

"Geraint thou art, and I know thee well," answered Gawaine, "and a wretched and insane expedition is this."

Thus saying, he looked around and saw Enid and welcomed her right gladly. Then he entreated Geraint to come to the King. But Geraint still refused, saying, "I will not, for I am not in a fit state to see any one."

Thereupon, behold one of the pages came after Gawaine to speak to him. So he sent him to apprise Arthur that Geraint was there wounded, and that he would not come to visit him, and that it was pitiable to see the plight that he was in. And this he did without Geraint's knowledge, inasmuch as he spoke in a whisper to the page.

"Entreat Arthur," said he, "to have his tent brought near the road, for he will not meet him willingly, and it is not easy to compel him in the mood he is in."

So the page came to Arthur, and told this. And the King caused his tent to be removed unto the side of the road; and the lady rejoiced in her heart when she saw what was done. Then Gawaine led Geraint onwards along the road, till they came to the place where Arthur was encamped, and the pages were pitching his tent by the roadside.

"Lord," said Geraint, "all hail to thee!"

"Heaven prosper thee! And who art thou?" said Arthur.

"It is Geraint," said Gawaine," and of his own free will would he not come to meet thee."

"Verily," said Arthur, "he is bereft of his reason."

Then came Enid, and saluted Arthur. "Heaven protect thee!" said he. And thereupon he caused one of the pages to take her from her horse.

"Alas, Enid," said Arthur, "what expedition is this?"

"I know not, my lord," said she, "save that it behooves me to journey by the same road upon which he journeys."

"My lord," said Geraint, "with thy permission we will depart."

"Whither wilt thou go?" said Arthur. "Thou canst not proceed now, unless it be to thy death."

"I had rather, lord, that thou let me go."

"That will I not do, by heaven," Arthur replied.

Then he caused a maiden to be sent for to conduct Enid to the tent where Guinevere's chamber was. And Guinevere and all her women were joyful at her coming; and they took off her riding dress and put other garments upon her. And Arthur ordered a tent to be pitched for Geraint, and a physician to be called, and that he be provided with an abundance of anything he needed.

And Arthur and his hosts remained there for nearly a month while Geraint was being healed. And when he was fully recovered, Geraint came to Arthur and asked his permission to depart. Then Arthur summoned the physicians, and asked them if Geraint was cured; and they told him that he was.

So the next day Arthur gave his permission for Geraint to continue on his adventures. And on the day following Arthur removed thence.

## CHAPTER VI

### HOW GERAINT AND ENID BECAME HAPPY AGAIN

SO Geraint and Enid went forth again; and Geraint desired Enid to keep before him, as she had done. And she went along the high road as before. As they journeyed along the road, they heard a loud wailing; and Geraint said, "Stand thou here and I will go and see what is the cause of this wailing."

"I will," she simply said in reply.

Then he went forward, and there, in an open glade of the wood, he saw a damsel, young and fair, bending over a knight who lay dead in his armor.

"Ah, lady," said Geraint, "what hath befallen thee?"

Looking up, she answered, "Sir, I was journeying here with my beloved husband, when lo, three giants came upon us, and, without any cause, they slew him."

"Which way went they hence?" asked Geraint.

"Yonder, by the high road," she replied.

So he returned to Enid, and said, "Go to the lady yonder and wait there till I come."

Enid was sad when he gave her this command,

fearing that Geraint would never return to her, but nevertheless she went to the damsel.

Meanwhile Geraint followed the giants and overtook them. Each was as great in stature as three common men, and carried in his hand a large club. Geraint rushed upon them, and thrust his lance through the body of one, and then drew it forth and slew another in the same way. But the third turned upon him, and struck him with his club, so that the blow crushed his shoulder and opened all his wounds anew, and the blood began to flow from him. Then Geraint drew his sword, and smote the giant so fiercely on the crown of his head that it was split down to the shoulders, and he fell down dead. So Geraint left him there and returned to Enid; and when he reached the place where she was he fell down lifeless from his horse.

Then Enid uttered a cry, piercing and loud and thrilling; and she came and stood over him where he had fallen.

Now it chanced that a wild earl called Limours, with a great company, was traveling on the high road; and he heard a great cry, and turned aside to see what was the cause of it. Seeing Enid, the earl said, "Fair lady, what hath befallen thee?"

"Ah, good sir," she said, "the only man I love or ever shall love is slain."

Then he said to the other lady, "And what is the cause of thy grief?"

"They have slain my dear husband also," she replied.

"Who was it that slew them?" asked the earl.

"Some giants," she answered, "slew my best beloved; and the other knight went in pursuit of them, and came back in the state thou seest."

Then the earl caused the dead knight to be buried; but it seemed to him that there was still some life left in Geraint, so he had him carried along with him in the hollow of his shield placed upon a bier. And the two women followed.

When they came to the earl's mansion, Geraint was placed upon a couch in the hall, in front of the table that was in the hall, and Enid sat by his side. The earl and his companions changed their traveling dress; and he came and asked Enid to do the same, but she refused.

When the earl saw the beauty of Enid, he said, "Do not be so sorrowful whether yonder knight live or die. Behold, a good earldom, together with myself, will I bestow upon thee; be therefore happy and joyful."

"I shall never henceforth be happy while I live," said Enid.

"Come, then, and eat with us," quoth the earl.

"No, by Heaven, I will not," she answered.

"But by Heaven thou shalt," cried the earl. And he forced her to come to the table, where he many times bade her to eat.

"I call Heaven to witness," said she, "that I will

not eat till he that is on yonder couch shall eat likewise."

"Thou canst not fulfil that pledge," said the earl, "for the man is already dead."

"I will prove that I can," she replied.

Then the earl offered her a goblet of wine, and bade her drink, saying, "It will cause thee to change thy mind."

But still she refused, saying, "Evil betide me, if I drink ought until he drink also."

At this the earl grew very wroth and said to her, "I see it is of no more avail for me to be gentle with you than ungentle."

With that he did a most unknightly deed, for he raised his hand and gave her a severe box upon the ear. Thereupon Enid raised a sharp and piercing cry, and faced the earl and said, "You would not have dared to do it if you had not thought my lord was dead."

At the sound of her cry, Geraint, who had fainted from pain and loss of blood, revived from his swoon, and sat upon the bier, and finding his sword in the hollow of the shield wherein he lay, he rushed upon the earl where he sat, and struck him so hard a blow that it clove him in twain until the sword was stayed by the table.

At sight of that blow and the spectre of a dead man rising from his bier, they all sprang up in fear, and fled from the table; and left Geraint and Enid alone.

When Geraint looked upon Enid and saw how pale she was and that she was weeping bitterly, his heart was moved with pity towards her, and he said, "Enid, I have used you worse than that dead man, and done you greater wrong. And all the trouble I have made you bear has made you thrice my own; and henceforth I would rather die than doubt your truth."

To this Enid could not say a single word, so deep was the gladness in her heart. But fearing for his life she cried, "Fly, my lord, for they will return and slay thee!"

Then Geraint asked her where their horses were, to which she said, "I know where thy horse is, my lord, but I know not where the other may be; thy horse is in the house yonder."

So Geraint went to the house and brought forth his horse, who neighed with gladness as they came, and stooped with a low whinny toward them; and Enid, in her joy, put her arm around his neck and kissed the white star upon his head.

Then Geraint mounted quickly and reached down his hand to Enid to help her on the horse; and as she placed her foot upon his own to climb he put his arm around her, and kissed her as she climbed, while she in wifely tenderness clasped her arms about him; and thus they rode away.

Thus they rode on with many an adventure until they came to King Arthur's court. And when they reached the camp, the king himself came

forth to greet them, and beholding Enid's face so pale and yet so happy, surmised the trouble, and gently lifted her from the horse, kissing her as a brother might, and showed her an empty tent into which she passed and Geraint with her. Then the king's own leech was sent to care for Geraint, and Enid tended on him there; and her constant presence near him and her sweet and thoughtful ministrations filled all the courses of his blood with deeper and ever deeper love. And so the days passed as a happy dream.

And when Geraint was whole again, they went with King Arthur to Caerleon upon the Usk, and there Queen Guinevere once more met Enid, and embraced her for the love she bore her, and clothed her in suitable apparel. And after tarrying there for a space, Geraint and Enid rode, with fifty knights accompanying them, to the shores of the Severn, and passed over to their own land of Cornwall.

And there Geraint reigned for many years with justice to his people, and won lasting renown, being foremost in the chase and tournaments, so that they gave him the title of the Great Prince. And in his home reigned Enid, whom her ladies loved to call Enid the Fair, while a grateful people named her Enid the Good.

**This story forms one of the chapters of Tennyson's "Idyls of the King." It is not found in Malory's King Arthur, as are the other stories of the "Idyls," but it is**

so similar in spirit and intrinsic interest that it is properly associated with them. Tennyson's poem, though containing some beautiful passages, does not improve upon the Welsh original. It appeals less to human sympathy and the sense of literary propriety on account of the more cruel character ascribed to Geraint. As Stopford A. Brooke says, "there is not a trace left in Geraint," as reproduced by Tennyson. While Geraint's treatment of Enid in the Mabinogion is cruel, in Tennyson it becomes insulting and brutal. "It is quite out of character with the days of chivalry in which the original story took its form," adds Brooke.

This is an old tale showing man's injustice and cruelty to woman and her patience and constancy under her wrongs. It would be difficult to find among the pages of romance a character of greater trust and simplicity than that of Enid. Her character is admirably sustained throughout the whole tale and is even more lovable and touching than that of Griselda Enid is the Griselda of the Welsh and may have been the prototype of the story as told by Boccacio and Chaucer. The story as told here omits many of the details of the original.

# The Story of Pwyll and Rhiannon

## Chapter I

### How Pwyll won Rhiannon for his Bride

ONCE upon a time, Pwyll, Prince of Dyved, was at Narberth, his palace, where a feast had been prepared. And a great host was with him, having been invited to the feast. After the first meal was over, Pwyll arose to walk, and he went to the top of a mound that stood above the palace. The mound was high and was called Gorsedd Arberth. As they stood upon the mound one of the court said to him, "Lord, it is peculiar to this mound that whosoever sits upon it cannot go thence without receiving wounds or blows, or else seeing a wonder."

"I fear not," answered Pwyll, "to receive wounds and blows in the midst of such a host; but as to the wonder that I would gladly see. I will go therefore and sit upon the mound."

So he went and sat upon the mound waiting to see the wonder. And while he sat there they saw a lady, on a pure white horse of large size, with a garment of shining gold around her, coming along the highway that led from the mound. Her horse

seemed to be moving at a slow and even pace, and to be coming up toward the mound.

Then said Pwyll, "My men, is there any among you who knows yonder lady?"

"There is not, lord," they replied.

"Go one of you and meet her," Pwyll said, "that we may know who she is."

So one of the men arose, and as he came upon the road to meet her, she passed by him. Then he followed her as fast as he could go, being on foot; but the greater his speed, the farther was she from him. And when he saw that it profited him nothing to follow her, he returned to Pwyll, and said unto him, "Lord, it is idle for any one to follow her on foot."

"Verily," replied Pwyll, "go unto the palace and take the fleetest horse that thou canst find, and ride after her."

So he went to the palace and took a horse and rode forward with much speed after the lady. Soon he came to an open level plain, and he put spurs to his horse to ride still faster; but the more he urged his horse the farther was the lady from him. After a while his horse began to fail; so he stopped his pursuit and returned to the place where Pwyll was.

"Lord," said he, "it will avail nothing for any one to follow yonder lady. I know of no horse in this realm stronger than this, and it availed me nothing to pursue her."

"Of a truth," said Pwyll, "there must be some illusion here. Let us go toward the palace."

So to the palace they went and there they spent the day. And the next day they arose, and after their repast Pwyll said, "Let us go with the same party as yesterday to the top of the mound. And do thou," said he to one of the young men, "take the swiftest horse that thou knowest in the field."

And thus the young man did; and they all went towards the mound, taking the horse with them. And as they were sitting down they beheld the lady on the same horse as yesterday, and in the same apparel, coming along the same road. Then said Pwyll, "Behold, here is the lady of yesterday. Make ready, youth, to learn who she is." And thereupon the lady came opposite to them.

Then the youth mounted his horse; and before he had settled himself in his saddle, she passed by and he rode after her. Soon there was a clear space between them, though her speed was no greater than it was the day before. Then he put his horse into an amble and thought that notwithstanding the gentle pace at which his horse went he would soon overtake her. But this availed him not; so he gave his horse the reins. And still he came no nearer to her than when he went at a foot's pace. And the more he urged his horse the farther was she from him; yet seemingly she rode not faster than at first.

Now when he saw that he could not overtake

the lady, he returned to the place where Pwyll was, and said, "Lord, the horse can do no more than thou hast seen."

"I see," replied Pwyll, "that it avails not that any one should follow her. And, by Heaven," he said, "she must have an errand to some one on this plain, if her haste would allow her to declare it. Let us go back to the palace." So to the palace they went, and they spent that night in songs and feasting, as it pleased them.

And the next day again they amused themselves until it was time to go to meat. And when meat was ended Pwyll said, "Where are the hosts that went yesterday and the day before to the top of the mound?"

"Behold, Lord, we are here," said they.

"Let us go to the mound," he said again, "and sit there. And do thou," he said to the page who tended his horse, "saddle my horse well, and hasten with him to the road, and bring also my spurs with thee."

So the youth did this as he was bidden; and they all went up and sat upon the mound as before. When they had been there but a short time, they beheld the lady coming by the same road, and in the same manner, and at the same pace as before.

"Young man," said Pwyll, "I see the lady coming; give me my horse."

And before he could mount his horse she passed him; and he turned after her and followed her.

At first he let his horse go bounding playfully along, thinking that he should soon come up to her; but he came no nearer to her than at first. Then he urged his horse to his utmost speed, yet still he found that it availed nothing to follow her.

Then said Pwyll, calling to the maiden, "O maiden, for the sake of him whom thou best lovest, stay for me."

"I will stay gladly," said she, "and it were better for thy horse if thou hadst asked it long since."

So the maiden stopped. And fixing her eyes on Pwyll, she began to talk with him.

"Lady," asked he, "whence comest thou, and whereunto dost thou journey?"

"I journey on mine own errand," she replied, "and right glad am I to see thee."

"My greeting be unto thee," he replied.

Then she threw back that part of her head dress which covered her face; and he thought that the beauty of all the maidens and all the ladies that he had ever seen, was as nothing compared with her beauty.

"Lady," he said, "wilt thou tell me aught concerning thy purpose?"

"I will tell thee," said she; "my chief quest was to seek thee."

"Behold," said Pwyll, "this is to me the most pleasing quest upon which thou couldst have come. And wilt thou tell me who thou art?"

To this the maiden answered, saying, "I will tell

thee, Lord. I am Rhiannon, the daughter of Heveydd Hen, and they sought to give me a husband against my will. But no husband would I have, and that because of my love for thee; neither will I yet have one unless thou reject me. And hither have I come to hear thy answer."

"By Heaven," said Pwyll, "behold this is my answer. If I might choose among all the ladies and damsels in the world, thee would I choose."

"Verily," said she, "if thou art thus minded, make a pledge to meet me ere I am given to another."

"The sooner I do so the more pleasing it will be to me," said Pwyll; "and wheresoever thou wilt, there will I meet with thee."

"I will that thou meet me this day twelvemonth at the palace of Heveydd. And I will cause a feast to be prepared, so that it be ready against the time that thou comest."

"Gladly," said he, "will I keep this tryst."

"Lord," said she, "remain in health, and be mindful that thou keep this promise; and now will I go hence."

So they parted, and he went back to his hosts and to them of his household. And whatsoever questions they asked him respecting the damsel, he replied not, but always turned the discourse upon other matters. And when a year from that time was gone, he caused a hundred knights to equip themselves and to go with him to the palace

of Heveydd Hen. And when he came to the palace, there was great joy concerning him, with much concourse of people and great rejoicing, and vast preparations for his coming. And the whole court was placed under his orders.

The hall was richly garnished, and as they went to meat they sat thus: Heveydd Hen was on one side of Pwyll, and Rhiannon on the other side; and all the rest were arranged according to their rank. And they ate and feasted, and talked with one another for a long while, and then arose for further entertainment. At the beginning of the carousal after meat, there entered a tall auburn haired youth, of royal bearing, clothed in a garment of satin. And when he came into the hall, he saluted Pwyll and his companions.

"The greeting of Heaven be unto thee," said Pwyll; "come thou and sit down with us."

"Nay," said the youth, "a suitor am I, and I will do mine errand."

"Do so, willingly," said Pwyll.

"Lord," said he, "my errand is unto thee, and it is to crave a boon of thee that I have come."

"What boon soever thou mayest ask of me, as far as I am able thou shalt have."

At this the maiden said, "Ah, wherefore, didst thou give that answer?"

"Hath he not given it before the presence of these nobles?" asked the youth.

"My soul," said Pwyll, "what is the boon thou cravest?"

"The lady whom best I love," the youth replied, "is to be thy bride to-night; I come to ask her of thee, with the feast and the banquet that are in this place."

At this Pwyll was silent with regret because of the answer he had given. And Rhiannon said, "Never did man make worse use of his wits than thou hast done."

"Lady," said he, "I knew not who he was, nor dreamed he would ask such a gift as this."

"Behold," she replied, "this is the man to whom they would have given me against my will. He is Gwawl, the son of Clud, a man of great power and wealth; and because of the word thou hast spoken, thou must bestow me upon him lest shame befall thee."

"Lady," answered Pwyll, "I understand not thy answer. Never can I do as thou sayest."

"Bestow me upon him," she said, "and I will cause that I shall never be his."

"By what means can this be?" he inquired.

Then Rhiannon said, "In thy hand I will give thee a bag which thou art to keep; and I will engage to become his bride this night twelvemonth. And at the end of the year be thou there, and bring the bag with thee, and let thy hundred knights be in the orchard yonder. And when he is in the midst of joy and feasting, come thou in by thyself,

clad in ragged garments, hiding the bag in thy hand, and ask nothing but a bag full of food; and I will cause that if all the mead and liquor that are in these seven Cantrevs were put into it, it would be no fuller than before. And after a great deal has been put therein he will ask thee whether thy bag will ever be full. And thou shalt say that it never will until a man of noble birth and of great wealth shall arise and press the food in the bag with both his feet, saying, "Enough has been put there." And I will cause him to go and tread down the food in the bag; and when he does so, turn thou the bag so that he shall be up over his head in it, and then slip a knot upon the thongs of the bag. Let there be also a good bugle horn about thy neck, and as soon as thou hast bound him in the bag, wind thy horn, and let it be a signal between thee and thy knights. And when they hear the horn let them come in haste down upon the palace."

Then Gwawl said, "Lord, it is meet that I have an answer to my request."

To which Pwyll replied, "As much of that which thou hast asked as it is in my power to give, thou shalt have."

And Rhiannon said to Gwawl, "As for the feast and the banquet that are here, I have bestowed them upon the men of Dyved, and the household and the warriors who are with us. These can I not suffer to be given to any others. But in a year

from to-night a banquet shall be prepared for thee in this palace, that I may become thy bride."

So Gwawl went forth to his possessions, and Pwyll went back to Dyved. And they both spent that year until it was the time for the feast at the palace of Heveydd Hen. Then Gwawl set out to the feast that was prepared for him, and he came to the palace and was received there with great rejoicing. Pwyll, also, came to the orchard with his hundred knights, having the bag with him, as Rhiannon had commanded. And Pwyll was clad in coarse and ragged garments, and wore large clumsy shoes upon his feet. When he knew that the carousal after the meat had begun, he went toward the hall; and when he came into the hall, he saluted Gwawl and his company, both men and women.

"Heaven prosper thee," said Gwawl, "and the greeting of Heaven be unto thee."

"Lord," said Pwyll, "may Heaven reward thee; I have an errand unto thee."

"Welcome be thy errand," said Gwawl, "and if thou ask of me anything that is just, thou shalt have it gladly."

"It is fitting," replied Pwyll; "I crave but from want, and the boon that I ask is to have this small bag, that thou seest, filled with meat."

"That is a request within reason," Gwawl replied, "and gladly thou shalt have it." Then turn-

ing to his servants he said, "Bring him the food he wants."

At this a great number of the attendants rose and began to fill the bag; but for all they put into it, it was no fuller than at first.

"My soul," said Gwawl, "will the bag never be full?"

"It will not, I fear," said Pwyll, "unless one possessed of lands and domains and treasures shall arise and tread down with both his feet the food that is within the bag and shall say, "Enough has been put therein."

Then said Rhiannon unto Gwawl, "Rise up quickly and press down the food."

"I will willingly do so," said he.

So he rose and put his two feet into the bag. Then Pwyll turned up the sides of the bag so that Gwawl was over his head in it. And he shut it up quickly and slipped a knot upon the thongs, and blew his horn. Thereupon behold his household came down upon the palace, and they seized all the host that had come with Gwawl, and cast them into his own prison. And then Pwyll threw off his rags and his old shoes and his tattered array and they all saw who he was. As the knights of Pwyll came in every one of them in turn struck a blow upon the bag and asked, "What is here?"

"A badger," they replied.

And in this manner they played with the bag, each of them striking it with his foot or with a

staff. And every one as he came in asked, "What game are you playing at thus?"

"The game of Badger in the Bag," they replied. And thus was the game of Badger in the Bag first played.

As they thus played with the bag, the man within cried out, "If thou wouldst but hear me, let me say that I merit not to be slain in a bag."

"That is true, lord," said Heveydd Hen. "It were fitting that thou listen to him, for he deserves not this cruel treatment."

"Verily," said Pwyll, "I will do whatever thou dost counsel concerning him."

"Behold, this is my counsel," said Rhiannon, "thou art now in a position in which it behooves thee to satisfy suitors and minstrels; let him give unto them in thy stead, and take a pledge from him that he will never seek to revenge that which has been done to him. And this will be punishment enough."

"I will do this gladly," said the man in the bag.

"And gladly will I accept it," said Pwyll, "since it is the counsel of Heveydd and Rhiannon."

And upon this he was let out of the bag, and he gave sureties that he would keep the promise that he had made. And he said to Pwyll, "Lord, I am greatly hurt, and have many bruises, and have need to be anointed. So with thy leave I will go forth; and I will leave nobles in my stead to answer for me in all that thou shalt require."

"Willingly mayst thou do this," said Pwyll. So Gwawl went toward his own possessions.

Then the hall was set in order for Pwyll and his men, and for them also at the palace; and they went to the tables and sat down to meat. And they ate and feasted and spent the night in mirth and pleasure. And thus Rhiannon became the bride of Pwyll.

The next morning at the break of day Rhiannon said, "My lord, arise now and begin to give thy gifts unto the minstrels. Refuse no one to-day that may claim thy bounty."

And Pwyll answered, "Thus shall it be gladly, both to-day and every day while the feast shall last."

So Pwyll arose, and he caused silence to be proclaimed, and desired all the suitors and the minstrels to point out what gifts they desired. And this being done the feast went on, and he denied no one anything while it lasted.

And when the feast ended, Pwyll said unto Heveydd, "My lord, with thy permission I will set out for Dyved to-morrow."

"Certainly," said Heveydd, "and may Heaven prosper thee. Fix also a time when Rhiannon may follow thee."

"We will go hence together," said Pwyll.

"As thou willest, lord," said Heveydd.

So the next day they set forward toward Dyved, and journeyed to the palace of Narberth, where a

feast was made ready for them. And there came to them great numbers of the chief men and the most noble ladies of the land; and of these there was none to whom Rhiannon did not give some rich gift, either a bracelet, or a ring, or a precious stone. And they ruled the land prosperously both that year and the next, and Rhiannon was much loved and honored by all who knew her.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FALSE ACCUSATION AGAINST RHIANNON

NOW in the third year a son was born to Pwyll and Rhiannon. And on the night he was born women watched the mother and the boy. As they watched they all fell asleep, and when they awoke they looked where they had put the boy, and behold he was not there.

"Oh," said one of the women, "the boy is lost!"

"Yes," said another, "and it will be small vengeance if we are burnt or put to death because of the child."

"Is there any counsel for us in this matter?" said another woman.

"There is," replied a fourth, "and I will offer good counsel."

"What is that?" said they all.

Then she said, "There is here a hound that hath a litter of whelps. Let us kill some of the whelps and rub the blood on the face and hands of Rhiannon and assert that she hath killed her son, and she alone will not be able to gainsay us six." And according to this counsel it was settled.

Now toward morning Rhiannon awoke, and she said, "Women, where is my son?"

"Lady," said they, "ask us not concerning thy son, for see by the blood on thy hands that thou hast slain him. And by our faith we have nought but the blows and bruises which we got struggling with thee to prevent the deed."

"For pity's sake," said Rhiannon, "the Lord knows all things. Charge me not falsely. If you tell me this from fear, I assert before Heaven that I will defend you."

"Truly," they replied, "we would not bring evil on ourselves for any one in the world."

"But you will receive no evil for telling the truth," said Rhiannon. But for all her words, whether fair or harsh, she received but the same answer from the women.

Now in the morning Pwyll, the chief of Annwvyn, arose and all his household and heard the story of the death of his son. And the loss of his son could not be concealed, but the story of the women went forth throughout the land, and all the nobles heard of it. Then came the nobles to Pwyll and besought him to put away his wife, because of the great crime she had done. But Pwyll answered them that they had no cause to ask him to put away his wife, for he did not believe her guilty of any wrong; but if she could not prove her innocence let her do penance for it.

So Rhiannon finding she could not contend against the six women was obliged to take a penance for the fault with which she was charged. And

the penance that was imposed upon her was that she should remain in that palace of Narberth until the end of seven years, and that she should sit every day near unto a horseblock that was without the gate. And that she should relate the story to all who should come there, whom she might suppose not to know it already; and that she should offer the guests and strangers, if they would permit her, to carry them upon her back into the palace. And thus did she spend part of the year; but it rarely happened that any would permit her to carry them to the castle.

Now at that time there lived in the land, Tiernyon Twyrv Vliant, who was Lord of Gwent; and he was said to be the best man in the world. And he had a beautiful horse that often brought him a colt, but as soon as the colt was born it immediately disappeared. So one night he determined to watch and see what became of the colt. As soon as the colt was born he rose to look upon it, when he heard a great tumult, and after the tumult behold a claw came through the window into the house, and it seized the colt by the mane.

Then Teirnyon drew his sword and struck off the arm at the elbow, so that a portion of the arm together with the colt was in the house with him. And then did he hear a tumult and wailing, both at once. At this he opened the door and rushed out in the direction of the noise, but he could not see the cause of the tumult because of the darkness

of the night. Then he rushed out after it and followed it for a long distance. After a while he remembered that he had left the door open and he returned to the house; and at the door behold there was an infant boy in swaddling clothes, wrapped around in a mantle of satin. Taking up the boy in his arms he found that he was very strong for the age that he seemed.

He then shut the door and went into the chamber where his wife was, saying, "Lady, art thou sleeping?"

"No, lord," said she, "I was asleep, but as thou camest in I did awake."

"Behold, here is a boy for thee," he said, "if thou wilt have him."

"My lord," said she, "what adventure is this?"

"It was this," said Tiernyon; and he told her how it all befell.

Then she asked him what garments the child had on; and he told her "a mantle of satin."

"He is then a boy of gentle lineage," she replied.

Then they agreed to keep the boy as their own; and they caused him to be baptized; and the name which they gave unto him was Gwri Wallt Euryn, because what hair was upon his head was as yellow as gold. They had the boy nursed in court until he was a year old; and before the year was over he could walk stoutly. He grew so rapidly that within the year he was larger than a boy three

years of age, even one of unusual growth and size. And at the end of the second year he was as large and as strong as a child six years of age.. And before the end of the fourth year he would bribe the grooms to allow him to take the horses to water.

One day his wife said unto Teirnyon, "My lord, where is the colt that thou didst save on the night that thou didst find the boy?"

"I have given it," he said, "unto the care of the grooms."

"Would it not be well, lord," said she, "if thou wast to cause it to be broken in, and given to the boy, seeing that on the same night that thou didst find the boy, the colt was foaled and thou didst save him?"

"I will not oppose thee in this matter," said Teirnyon, "but allow thee to give him the colt."

"May Heaven reward thee, lord," she said, "and I will give him the colt."

So the horse was given to the boy; and the grooms were commanded to be careful of the horse so that he might be broken in by the time that the boy could ride him.

Now while these things were going forward they heard tidings of Rhiannon and her punishment. And Teirnyon, by reason of the pity he felt on hearing the story of Rhiannon, inquired closely concerning it, until he heard the story from many of those who came to his court. Then did Tiernyon, lamenting the sad history, often ponder within

himself; and as he looked at the boy it seemed to him that he had never beheld so great a likeness between the father and son as between Pwyll and the boy. Thereupon he became grieved for the wrong that he did, in keeping with him a boy whom he knew to be the son of another man. So the first time that he was alone with his wife he told her what he thought, that it was not right that they should keep the boy with them, and suffer so excellent a lady as Rhiannon to be punished so greatly on his account. And Teirnyon's wife agreed with him and said that they should send the boy to Pwyll.

So no later than the next day Teirnyon equipped himself, and taking two other knights with him, started to the court of Pwyll. And the boy, riding on the young horse which Teirnyon had given to him, went with them. Their journey lay toward Narberth; and it was not long before they reached that place. As they drew near to the palace they saw Rhiannon sitting beside the horseblock doing her penance. And when they were opposite to her she said, "Chieftain, go not further thus, I will bear every one of you on my back into the palace, and this is my penance for being charged with slaying my son."

"Oh, fair lady," said Teirnyon, "think not that I will be one to be carried upon thy back."

"Neither will I," said the boy.

So they all went forward toward the palace; and

there was great joy at their coming. At the palace there was a feast prepared, because Pwyll had just come back from the confines of Dyved; and Pwyll was rejoiced to see Teirnyon. Going into the hall they washed themselves and prepared to sit down to the feast. When they sat down at the table, this was the order in which they sat: Teirnyon between Pwyll and Rhiannon, and Teirnyon's two companions on the other side of Pwyll, and the boy between them. And after meat they began to carouse and discourse as was the custom of the time. Then Teirnyon told them the adventure of the colt and of the boy, and how he and his wife had nursed and reared the child as their son.

Then turning to Rhiannon he said, "Behold, lady, here is thy son; and whosoever told that lie concerning thee hath done thee a great wrong. And when I heard of thy sorrow I was troubled and grieved, believing the boy was thy son, and I resolved to bring him to thee. And I believe that there is none of this host who will not perceive that the boy is the son of Pwyll."

At this they all looked upon the boy and at Pwyll, and they said, "There is none here who is not certain thereof."

Then Rhiannon rose and went to the boy and clasped him in her arms and kissed him many times, and said, "I declare to Heaven if this be true, then there is indeed an end to my trouble,

and my son's name shall be Pryderi, for the sorrow I have had."

Then there was great rejoicing among them all. And Pendaran Dyved said, "Lady, well hast thou named thy son Pryderi, meaning anxiety; and well becomes he the name of Pryderi, son of Pwyll, Chief of Annwvyn."

"Look you," said Rhiannon, "will not his own name become him better?"

"What name has he?" asked Pendaran Dyved.

"Gwri Wallt Euryn is the name that we gave him," said Teirnyon.

"Pryderi," said Pendaran, "shall his name be."

"It is more proper," said Pwyll, "that the boy should take his name from the word his mother spoke when she received the joyful tiding of him." And thus it was arranged.

Then Pwyll said, "Teirnyon, may Heaven reward thee that thou hast reared the boy up to this time, and being of gentle lineage, it were fitting that he should repay thee for it."

"My lord," said Teirnyon, "it was my wife who nursed him, and there is no one in the world so afflicted as she is at parting with him. It were well that he should bear in mind what I and my wife have done for him."

"I call Heaven to witness," said Pwyll, "that while I live I will support thee and thy possessions, as long as I am able to preserve my own. And when he shall have power, he will more fitly main-

tain them than I. And now if this counsel shall be pleasing unto thee, and to my nobles, I will give him to be brought up by Pendaran Dyved, from henceforth. And you shall be companions, and shall both be foster-fathers unto him."

"This is good counsel," said they all. So the boy was given to Pendaran Dyved, and the nobles of the land were sent with him. And Teirnyon and his companions set out for their own country with joy and gladness. And though he was offered the fairest jewels and the fastest horses and the choicest dogs, he would take none of them.

And Pryderi, the son of Pwyll, was brought up carefully as was fitting for a prince so that he became the fairest youth, and the most comely, and the best skilled in all good games, of any in the kingdom. And thus passed years and years, until the end of Pwyll's life came, and he died.

And Pryderi ruled the seven Cantrevs of Dyved prosperously, and he was beloved by his people, and by all around him. And he added unto his possessions many other Cantrevs until he was ruler of a large country. In course of time he desired to take a wife; and the wife he chose was Kicva, the daughter of Gwynn Gohoyw, the son of Glowy Wallt Lydan, the son of Prince Casnar, one of the nobles of the island.

**This story is abridged from the original by omitting a first part that is of little interest, and that has no connection with portion that is given. Its underlying**

motive seems to be to portray an act of justice to a true and faithful woman who has been wronged by an act of treachery. The name Pwyll means literally Prudence.

After the death of Pwyll, Rhiannon was bestowed, by her son Pryderi, in marriage upon Manawyddan, the son of Llyr, as will be seen in the story that bears his name. Her marvellous birds whose notes were so sweet that warriors remained spell-bound for eighty years listening to them have been a frequent theme with the poets.

# Branwen, the Daughter of Llyr:

## Chapter I

### How Branwen became the Wife of Matholwch.

MANY years ago Bendigied Vran, the son of Llyr, was the King of the island called the Island of the Mighty. One afternoon he sat upon a rock looking over the sea, and with him were his brother Manawyddan, the son of Llyr, and his brothers by his mother's side named Nissyen and Evnissyen, and many nobles likewise as was fitting to see around a king. One of these brothers, Nissyen, was a goodly youth of a gentle and peaceful nature who loved to live in peace with all men; while the other, Evnissyen, loved rather to cause strife between those with whom he lived.

As they thus sat upon the rock, they beheld thirteen ships coming from the south of Ireland, and making towards them with a swift motion. "I see ships afar," said the king, "coming swiftly toward the land. Command the men of the court to equip themselves and go and learn their intent."

So the men equipped themselves and went down toward the shore; and when they saw the ships

near, they were surprised at their size and beauty. One of the ships was larger than the others, and upon it was a large shield lifted up above the side of the ship, and the point of the shield was upward as a token of peace.

As the ships came near the shore the men on them put out in boats and came toward the land. As soon as they came near enough they saluted the king.

"Heaven prosper you," said the king, "and be ye welcome. To whom do these ships belong, and who is your chief?"

"Lord," they replied, "Matholwch, King of Ireland, is here, and these ships belong to him."

"Wherefore comes he?" asked the king, "and will he come to the land?"

"He is suitor unto thee, lord," said they; "and he will not land unless he have his boon."

"And what may be his boon?" inquired the king.

"He desires to ally himself with thee, lord," said they, "and he comes to ask Branwen, the daughter of Llyr, to be his wife, that, if it seem well to thee, the Island of the Mighty may be leagued with Ireland, and both become more powerful."

"Verily," said the king, "let him come to land, and we will take counsel thereupon."

When this answer was brought to Matholwch he said, "I will go willingly."

So he came with his men to the shore, and the

king and his people received him joyfully; and great was the throng in the palace that night between his hosts and those of the court.

The next day they took counsel together and the king resolved to bestow Branwen to be the wife of Matholwch. Now she was one of the three chief ladies of this island, and she was said to be the fairest damsel in the world. So a banquet was prepared there under great tents, as no house was large enough to contain Bendigeid Vran; and there amid great pomp Branwen became the bride of Matholwch.

The next day they arose, and all they of the court; and the officers began to equip and arrange the horses and the attendants; and they ranged them in order as far as the sea.

And behold soon after, Evnissyen, the quarrelsome one, came by chance to that place where the horses of Matholwch were; and he asked whose horses they might be. And they told him that they were the horses of Matholwch, King of Ireland, who had been married to his sister Branwen. When he heard this he was angry that they had given his sister in marriage without his knowledge or consent. And thereupon he rushed under the horses and cut off their lips at their teeth, and their ears close to their heads, and their tails close to their backs; and wherever he could clutch their eyelids, he cut them to the very bone; and thus he disfigured the horses and rendered them useless.

And they came with these tidings to Matholwch, saying that the horses were disfigured and so injured that not one of them could be of any use again. "Verily, lord," said one, "it is an insult unto you, and so it was meant."

"It is a marvel to me," he replied, "that if they desired to insult me they should have given me a maiden of such high rank and so beloved by them all."

"Lord," said another, "it is certain that it is an insult, and there is nothing for thee to do but to go to thy ships." And thereupon he set out for his ships.

Soon the tidings came to Bendigeid Vran that Matholwch was quitting the court without taking leave; and messengers were sent to inquire of him wherefore he did so. He replied, "I have been greatly insulted; but one thing surprises me, that you should have given me Branwen, the king's sister, for a bride and then have done me this insult."

"Truly, lord," said the messenger, "it was not the will of the king or the court that thou shouldst be insulted, and the dishonor is greater unto Bendigeid Vran than unto thee."

"Truly," said he, "I think so; nevertheless he cannot recall the insult."

And when he would not return they sent another embassy after him to persuade him to return. And they offered him a sound horse for every one that had been injured. And beside that, as an atone-

ment for the insult, they said that he should have a staff of silver as large and tall as himself, and a plate of gold the breadth of his face.

And the king said, "Show him also who it was that did the deed, and that it was against my will; but that he who did it is my brother and therefore it would be hard for me to put him to death. And let him come and meet me, and we will make peace in any way he may desire."

Thus they pleaded with him to return, saying they would atone for the insult in every way in their power. So at length he decided to accept the offers of atonement and to return to the court. Then the pavilions and the tents were set in order after the fashion of a hall, and they sat down to the feast as before. And as they talked Bendigeid Vran thought that Matholwch was not as cheerful as he was before and that it was because of the smallness of the atonement that had been made. So he said to him that he would pay him not only for his horses, but give him beside a cauldron, the property of which was that if any one was slain and cast therein, on the morrow he would be as well as ever, except that he would not regain his speech. So the next morning the king gave Matholwch the horses and the cauldron as was promised

That night they held a feast again with minstrelsy and dancing, and when it was more pleasant for them to sleep than to sit longer, they went

They caused the butcher to come to her every day and give her a blow

to rest. Now when the feastings were all finished Matholwch sailed for Ireland and Branwen with him. And in Ireland there was great joy at their coming. And they welcomed Branwen full cordially; and there was not a great man or a noble lady to whom she did not give either a clasp, or a ring, or a royal jewel. And thus she passed the time pleasantly for a year or more enjoying the honor and the friendship of her people. And in due time a son was born, and the name they gave him was Gwern, the son of Matholwch.

But behold in the second year, word was brought to the court of Matholwch of the treatment he had received in Britain; and a tumult arose throughout Ireland on account of the insult which he had received in Cambria and the payment made him for his horses. And his foster brothers and such as were nearest unto him blamed him openly that he would submit to such treatment. And he had no peace by reason of the tumult they made that he should avenge this great disgrace. And the vengeance which they took was to drive away Branwen from the palace chambers and make her cook for the court. And moreover they caused the butcher after he had cut up the meat to come to her every day and give her a blow on the ear. And such they made her punishment for the insult that Matholwch had received in the Isle of Britain.

Moreover they said to Matholwch, "Verily, lord,

forbid now the ships and the ferry boats that they go not unto Wales; and such as come over from Wales hither do thou imprison them that they go not back again." And so he did; and thus it was for no less than three years.

Meanwhile Branwen thought how she might acquaint her people of the insults heaped upon her. So she reared a starling in the cover of the kneading trough, and she taught it to speak, and also to know what kind of man her brother was. And she wrote a letter telling of her woes, and the despite with which she was treated; and she bound the letter to the root of the bird's wing, and sent him towards Britain. And the bird came to that island, and one day it found Bendigeid, and alighted upon his shoulder and ruffled its feathers, so that the letter was seen.

Then Bendigeid Vran took the letter; and when he had read it he was grieved exceedingly at the tidings of Branwen's woes. And he immediately began sending messengers throughout the land to summon the people of the island together. And when they had come he told them of the grief and despite that his sister endured. Then they took counsel together and resolved to go to Ireland, and to leave seven men as princes at home to take charge of the island. And Caradawc, the son of Bran, was the chief among the princes.

Then they took ships and manned them with their knights and nobles and set sail for Ireland.

As they came near the island, the swineherds of Matholwch were upon the shore; and having never seen ships before they were struck with awe at the sight. And they came to Matholwch saying, "Heaven protect thee, for we have seen a marvelous thing,—a wood upon the sea in a place where we never before have seen a single tree."

This is indeed a marvel," said Matholwch; "saw you aught else?"

"We saw, lord," they said, "a vast mountain beside the wood, which moved, and there was a lofty ridge on the top of the mountain, and a lake on each side of the ridge. And the wood and the mountain, and all these things moved."

"Verily," said he, "there is none who can know what all this means, unless it be Branwen."

So they sent for Branwen; and when she came they said to her, "Lady, what thinkest thou that this is?"

And she said, "These are the men of the Island of the Mighty, who have come hither on hearing of my ill treatment and my sorrow."

"What is the forest that is seen upon the sea?" they asked.

"The yards and the masts of the ships," she answered.

"Alas," said they, "what is the mountain that is seen by the side of the ships?"

"That is my brother, Bendigeid Vran," she replied, "coming to shoal water; and he is wading to

the land, for he is so large that there is no ship that can contain him."

"What is the lofty ridge with the lake on each side thereof?" they asked.

"On looking towards this island he is wroth; and his two eyes, one on each side of his nose, are the two lakes on each side of the ridge."

Then the warriors and chief men of Ireland were brought together in great haste; and they took counsel together as to what they should do. And the nobles said unto Matholwch that they should retreat over the river Linon, and should break down the bridge that is across the river, and thus keep the river between them and their foe. So they retreated across the river and broke down the bridge. Now there was loadstone at the bottom of this river so that neither ship nor vessel could pass over it.

Soon Bendigeid Vran came to land and the fleet with him, by the bank of the river. And his chieftains said, "Lord, thou knowest the nature of this river, that nothing can go across it, and there is no bridge over it. Now what is thy counsel concerning a bridge?"

"There is none," said he, "except that he who will be chief, let him be a bridge. And I will be so myself," he said.

So he lay down across the river, and hurdles were placed upon him, and the host passed over thereby. As he rose up, behold the messengers of

Matholwch came to him and saluted him and gave him greeting in the name of Matholwch, and showed him that of his good will he had merited nothing of him but good. "For Matholwch," they said, "has given the kingdom of Ireland to Gwern, the son of Matholwch, thy nephew and thy sister's son. And this he hath done as a compensation for the wrong and despite that has been done to Branwen."

Then said Bendigeid, "Shall not I myself have the kingdom? If so, then peradventure I may take counsel concerning your message. From this time until then no other answer will you get from me."

"Verily," they answered, "the best message that we receive for thee we will convey it unto thee, and do thou await our message unto Matholwch."

"I will wait," answered he, "and do you return quickly."

So the messengers set forth and came to Matholwch, and said, "Lord, prepare a better message for Bendigeid Vran. He would not listen at all to the message that we bore him."

"My friends," said Matholwch, "what may be your counsel?"

"Lord," said they, "our counsel is that as on account of his great size he hath never been in a house, that thou make a house that will contain him and the men with him; he and his host on one side, and thyself and thy host on the other side;

and give over thy kingdom to his will and pay him homage."

So the messengers went back to Bedigeid Vran, bearing him this message. And he took counsel and it was resolved to accept this offer. And this was all done by the advice of Branwen, lest the country should be destroyed. And thus peace was made; and the house was built, both vast and strong and large enough to contain Bendigeid.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SAD FATE OF BRANWEN AND HER SON

NOW the Irish planned a crafty device, and the craft was that they should put brackets on each side of the hundred pillars that were in the house, and should place a leathern bag on each bracket, and an armed man in every one of the leathern bags. Thus did they plan to destroy the men of the Island of the Mighty.

Then Evnissyen came in before the host of the Island of the Mighty, and scanned the house with fierce and savage looks, and descried the leathern bags which were around the pillars.

"What is in this bag?" asked he of one of the Irish.

"Meal, good soul," he replied.

And Evnissyen felt about it until he came to the man's head, and he squeezed the head until he felt his fingers meet together through the bone.

And he left that one and went to another, and asked what was therein.

"Meal," said the Irishman. And Evnissyen felt about as before until he found the head and crushed it. So he did the like unto every one of them, until he had left alive only one of all the two

hundred men. And when he came to the last one he asked what was there. And the Irishman answered as before, saying, "Meal, good soul."

And he felt about as before until he felt the head, and he found that the head of this one was armed; nevertheless he squeezed it until he had killed him. And then he sang a song:

"There is in this bag a different sort of meal,
The ready combatant, when the assault is made
By his fellow wariors, prepared for battle."

Thereupon the hosts came unto the house; the men of the Island of Ireland entering the house on the one side and the men of Bendigeid of the Island of the Mighty on the other side. And as soon as they had sat down there was concord between them, and the sovereignty was conferred upon the boy, the son of Branwen. When the peace was thus concluded Bendigeid called the boy unto him, and from Bendigeid the boy went unto Manawyddan, and he was beloved by all who beheld him.

Then Nissyen called the boy unto him, and the boy went unto him lovingly, and Nissyen caressed him with much affection. And Evnissyen said, "Wherefore comes not my nephew, the son of my sister, unto me? Though he were not king of Ireland yet willingly would I fondle the boy."

"Cheerfully let him go unto thee," said Bendigeid Vran, and the boy went unto him cheerfully.

Then Evnissyen arose and took up the boy by the feet, and before any one in the house could seize hold of him, he thrust the boy headlong into the blazing fire. And when Branwen saw her son burning in the fire, she strove to leap into the fire also, from the place where she sat between her two brothers. But Bendigeid Vran grasped her with one hand and his shield with the other. Then they all arose and hurried about the house, and never was there made so great a tumult by any host in one house as was made by them, as each man armed himself. And while they all sought their arms, Bendigeid Vran supported Branwen between his shield and his shoulder, while the conflict waged with great fury.

Then the Irish kindled a fire under the cauldron of renovation, and they cast the dead bodies into the cauldron until it was full; and the next day they came forth fighting men as good as before, except that they were not able to speak. When Evnissyen saw the dead bodies of the Island of the Mighty nowhere resuscitated, he said in his heart, "Alas! woe is me that I should have been the cause of bringing the men of the Island of the Mighty unto so great a strait. Evil betide me if I find not a deliverance therefrom."

And he cast himself among the dead bodies of the Irish; and two unshod Irishmen came to him, and taking him to be one of the Irish, they flung him into the cauldron. And he stretched himself

out in the cauldron so that he burst it into four pieces, and burst his own heart also.

And the men of the Island of the Mighty were defeated and all slain except seven men who escaped. Now the men who escaped were Pryderi, Manawyddan, Taliesin, and four others. And in the battle Bendigeid Vran was wounded in the foot with a poisoned arrow. And knowing that he could not live Bendigeid Vran commanded that they should cut off his head. "And take you my head," he said, "and bear it unto the White Mount in London, and bury it there with the face towards France. And a long time you will be upon the road. In Harleck you will be feasting seven years; the birds of Rhiannon singing unto you the while. And all that time the head will be to you as pleasant company as it was ever upon my body. And at Gwales in Penvro you will be four score years, and you may remain there until you open the door that looks toward Aber Henvelen and toward Cornwall. And after you have opened that door, go straight forward to London and there bury my head."

So they cut off his head and these seven went forward therewith. And Branwen was the eighth with them, and they came to land at Aber Alaw, and there sat down to rest. And Branwen looked towards Ireland and towards the Island of the Mighty, to see if she could descry them.

"Alas," said she, "woe is me that I was ever

born; two islands have been destroyed because of me."

Then she uttered a loud groan, and there broke her heart. And they made her a four-sided grave, and buried her upon the banks of the Alaw.

Then the seven men journeyed forward towards Harlech, bearing the head with them. And as they journeyed behold there met them a multitude of men and women.

"Have you any tidings?" asked Manawyddan.

"We have none," they answered, "save that Caswallawn, the son of Beli, has conquered the Island of the Mighty, and is crowned king in London."

"What has become," said they, "of Caradawc, the son of Bran, and the seven men who were left with him in this island?"

"Caswallawn came upon them, and slew six of the men, and Caradawc's heart broke for grief thereof; for he could see the sword that slew the men, but knew not who it was that wielded it. For Caswallawn had flung upon him the Veil of Illusion, so that no one could see him slay the men, but the sword only could they see. And it liked him not to slay Caradawc, because he was his nephew, the son of his cousin. And now he was the third whose heart had broke through grief. And Pendaran Dyved, who had remained as a young page with these men, escaped into the wood," they said.

Then the seven men journeyed on to Harlech,

bearing the head with them. And when they reached that place they stopped there to rest; and they sat down to eat and to drink. And there came three birds and began singing unto them a certain song, and all the songs they had ever heard were unpleasant compared thereto; and the birds seemed to them to be at a great distance from them over the sea, yet they appeared as distinct as if they were close by. And at this place they continued seven years.

At the close of the seventh year they went forth to Gwales in Penvro. And there they found a fair and regal spot overlooking the ocean; and a spacious hall was therein. And they went into the hall, and two of the doors were open, but the third door was closed,—that which looked toward Cornwall. And there they remained four score years unconscious of ever having spent a time more joyous and mirthful. And they were not more weary than when first they came, neither did they know the time they had been there. And it was not more irksome to them having the head with them, than if Bendigeid Vran had been with them himself.

One day said Heilyn, the son of Gwynn, "Evil betide me, if I do not open the door to know if that is true which hath been said concerning it."

So he opened the door and looked toward Cornwall and Aber Henvelen. And when they had looked, they were as conscious of all the evils they had ever sustained, and of all the friends and com-

panions that they had lost, and of all the misery that had befallen them, as if it had all happened on that very spot; and especially of the fate of their lord. And they could not rest any longer, but journeyed forth with the head towards London. And there they buried the head in the White Mount, as Bendigeid Vran had commanded them. And so long as it was thus concealed no invasion from across the sea came to the island.

Thus endeth the story of the visit to the Island of the Mighty and the entertainment of Bendigeid Vran when the hosts went over to Ireland to avenge the wrong to Branwen, and concerning the seven years banquet in Harlech, and the singing of the birds of Rhiannon, and the sojourning of the head of Bendigeid Vran for the space of four score years.

"The beautiful Branwen (or Bronwen, "the white-bosomed," as she is more frequently called) is one of the most popular heroines of Welsh romance. No less celebrated for her woes than for her charms, we find that her eventful story was a favorite theme with the bards and poets of her nation. In 1813, a grave containing a funeral urn was discovered on the banks of the river Olow .....? in which there is every reason to suppose, the ashes of Bronwen (White Bosom), the daughter of Llyr and aunt to the great Caractacus, were deposited."—Lady Charlotte Guest.

The Island of the Mighty is one of the many names bestowed upon Britain by the Welsh. Caradaws, better known by his Latinised name of Caractacus, was for a numbers of years a captive at Rome. He is extolled in

Welsh poetry as one of those brave princes who, by reason of their valor, could never be overcome save by treachery; and the treason by which he was cast into the hands of his enemies is often alluded to in Welsh poetry and history.

# The Story of Manawydan and the Mice

## Chapter I

### How Manawydan and Pryderi were Lost in the Magic Castle

NOW when Manawyddan had buried the head of Bendigeid Vran, as related in the previous story, and found his cousin had seized upon his possessions, much grief and heaviness came upon him As he gazed upon the town of London and upon his companions, he heaved a great sigh and said, "Alas, woe is me, for there is none save myself without a home and a resting place this night."

"Lord," said Pryderi, "be not so sorrowful. Thy cousin is King of the Island of the Mighty, and though he should do thee wrong, remember thou hast never been a claimant of land or possessions, and that thou art the third disinherited prince."

"Yea," he answered, "but although this man is my cousin, it grieveth me to see any one in the place of my brother, Bendigeid Vran; neither can I be happy in the same dwelling with him."

"Wilt thou follow the counsel of another?" said Pryderi.

"I stand in need of counsel," he answered, "and what may that counsel be?"

Then Pryderi said, "Seven Cantrevs remain unto me wherein Rhiannon, my mother, dwells. I will bestow her upon thee as thy wife and the seven Cantrevs with her. There are no possessions fairer than these; and when Rhiannon was in her prime no woman was fairer than she; and even now her aspect is not uncomely."

At first Manawyddan declined the offer with many thanks; but as he thought upon it he said, "I will go with thee to see Rhiannon and look at thy possessions."

So they set forth, and though long the journey, they came at length to Dyved, where Rhiannon dwelt. And a feast was prepared for them at Narberth by Rhiannon and Kicva, the wife of Pryderi. As Manawyddan sat at the feast and talked with Rhiannon his heart became warmed toward her, and he thought he had never beheld any lady more full of grace and beauty than she.

"Pryderi," said he, "I will that it be as thou didst say."

"What saying was that," asked Rhiannon.

"Lady," said Pryderi, "I did offer thee as a wife to Manawyddan, the son of Llyr."

"By that promise I will gladly abide," said Rhiannon.

"Right glad am I also," said Manawyddan;

"may Heaven reward him who hath shown me so great friendship."

And so before the feast was over she became the bride of Manawyddan.

Now as soon as the wedding feast was over they all four began to make the circuit of Dyved, and to hunt and take their pleasure. And as they went throughout the country, they thought they had never seen lands more pleasant to live in, nor better hunting grounds, nor greater plenty of honey and fish. And such was the friendship of these four that they could not be parted from one another by night or by day.

During the journey Pryderi went to Caswallawn at Oxford to tender his homage unto him; and honorable was his reception there and highly was he praised for offering his homage. And after his return Pryderi and Manawyddan feasted and took their ease and pleasure for many days.

Now at a feast at Narberth a marvelous thing occurred. As they sat one day at table, behold there came a peal of thunder and a violent wind; and there came upon them a fall of mist so thick that not one of them could see the other. And after the mist passed away it became light all around again; but when they looked toward the place where they were wont to see cattle, and herds, and dwellings, they could see nothing, neither house nor beast, nor smoke, nor fire, nor man, nor dwelling. The houses of the court were all empty, and

neither man nor beast was within them. And thus there were only four of them, and they knew not what had befallen their companions.

"In the name of Heaven," cried Manawyddan, "where are the people of the court and all my hosts beside them? Let us go and see."

So they came into the hall and there were no persons there; and they went on to the castle and the sleeping place, and they saw no one there; and in the mead cellar and in the kitchen there was naught but desolation. So after their surprise had passed they settled down to their former life, and the four feasted and hunted for awhile and took their pleasure.

After that they began to go throughout the land, visiting the houses and dwellings and all the possessions that they had, and they found nothing in the fields and forests but wild beasts. And when they had consumed all their provisions, they fed upon the prey they killed in hunting and the honey of the wild bees. And thus they passed the first year pleasantly, and also the second; but at last they began to be weary and lonely.

"Verily," said Manawyddan, "we must not abide thus. Let us go unto Lloegyr, and seek some craft whereby we may gain our support." So they went into Lloegyr, and came as far as Hereford. And they betook themselves to making saddles; and so skillful was Manawyddan that no saddles but his were bought of any saddler throughout all Here-

ford. At length the saddlers saw that they were losing much gain, since no man bought of them except those who could not get what they needed of Manawyddan. Then they assembled together and agreed to slay him and his companions.

Now when they heard of this, they took counsel whether they should leave the city. "By Heaven," said Pryderi, "it is not my counsel that we should quit the town, but that we should slay these boors."

"Not so," said Manawyddan, "for if we fight them we shall have evil fame, and shall be put in prison. It were better for us to go to another town to maintain ourselves." So the four went to another city.

"What craft shall we take here?" said Pryderi.

"We will make shields," said Manawyddan.

"Do we know anything about the craft?" asked Pryderi.

"We will try," answered Manawyddan.

So they began to make shields, and they fashioned them after the shape of the good shields they had seen; and so skilful were they that not a shield was asked for in the whole town that was not made by them. But at last they were marked by the craftsmen, who came together in haste, and their fellow townsmen with them; and they agreed that they should slay Manawyddan and his companions. But they received warning, and heard how the men had resolved on their destruction.

Then Pryderi said, "Let us fall upon those boors and slay them."

But Manawyddan answered, "Not so, for Caswallawn and his men will hear of it and we shall be undone. Let us rather go to another town." So to another town they went.

"What craft shall we take here?" said Manawyddan.

"Whatsoever thou wilt that we know," said Pryderi.

"Well, let us take to making shoes, for there is not courage enough among the cordwainers either to fight with us or to molest us."

"I know nothing thereof," said Pryderi.

"But I know," said Manawyddan; "and I will teach you to stitch. We will not attempt to dress the leather, but we will buy it ready dressed, and will make the shoes from it."

So Manawyddan began by buying the best cordwal that could be had in the town, and none other would he buy except the leather for the soles; and he associated himself with the best goldsmith in the town, and caused him to make clasps for the shoes, and to gild the clasps; and he marked how it was done until he learned the method. And therefore was he called one of three makers of Gold Shoes. Now his shoes were so beautiful that when they could be had from him, no shoes or hose were bought of any of the cordwainers of the town. And when the cordwainers saw that their

gains were falling off, they came together and took counsel and agreed that they would slay them.

"Pryderi," said Manawyddan, "these men are minded to slay us."

"Wherefore should we bear this from the boorish thieves?" said Pryderi. "Rather let us slay them all."

"Not so," said Manawyddan, "we will not slay them, neither will we remain in Lloegyr any longer. Let us set forth to Dyved and see what we shall find there."

So they journeyed along until they came again to Dyved, and they went forward to Narberth. And there they thought it best to support themselves by hunting. So they gathered their dogs around them, and went daily into the forest to hunt, and lived on honey and the flesh of wild beasts. And they tarried there one year.

One morning Pryderi and Manawyddan rose up to hunt; and they ranged their dogs and went forth from the palace. And some of the dogs ran before them and came to a small bush which was near at hand; but as soon as they came to the bush they hastily drew back and returned to the men, their hair bristling up with fear. "Let us go near the bush and see what is in it," said Pryderi.

As they came near, behold, a wild boar of a pure white color rose up from the bush. Then the dogs being set on by the men, rushed towards him; but he left the bush and fell back a little way from the

men, and made a stand against the dogs without retreating from them, until the men had come near. And when the men came up, he fell back a second time and betook himself to flight.

Then they pursued the boar until they beheld a vast and lofty castle all newly built, in a place where they had never before seen either stone or building. And the boar ran swiftly into the castle and the dogs after him. Now when the boar and the dogs had gone into the castle, they began to wonder at finding a castle in a place where they had never before seen any building whatsoever. And going to the top of a mound, they looked and listened for the dogs. But so long as they were there they heard not one of the dogs, nor could they see aught concerning them.

Then Pryderi said, "Lord, I will go into the castle to get tidings of the dogs."

"Truly," replied Manawyddan, "thou wouldst be unwise to go into this castle, which thou hast never seen till now. Whosoever has cast a spell over this land has caused this castle to be here."

"Of a truth," said Pryderi, "I cannot thus give up my dogs." And for all the counsel that Manawyddan gave him, into the castle he went.

When he came within the castle, he saw there neither man nor beast nor boar nor dogs nor any living thing. But in the center of the castle floor he beheld a fountain, with marble work around it; and on the margin of the fountain a golden bowl

upon a marble slab, and chains hanging from the bowl to which he saw no end. And he was greatly pleased with the beauty of the gold, and with the rich workmanship of the bowl; and he went up to the bowl and laid hold of it. And when he had taken hold of it his hands stuck to the bowl, and his feet to the slab on which the bowl was placed, and all his courage forsook him so that he could not utter a word. And thus he stood.

Now Manawyddan waited for him until near the close of the day. And late in the evening, being certain that he would have no tidings of Pryderi or of the dogs, he went back to the palace. And as he entered the palace Rhiannon looked at him and said, "Where are thy companion and thy dogs?"

"Behold," he answered, "the adventure that hath befallen me!" And he related it all to her.

"An evil companion hast thou been," she said, "and a good companion hast thou lost."

And with these words she went out, and proceeded toward the castle. The gate of the castle she found open; and nothing daunted she went in. And as she went in she perceived Pryderi laying hold of the bowl, and she went toward him.

"Oh, my lord," she said, "what dost thou here?" And she took hold of the bowl with him; and as she did so her hands became fast to the bowl, and her feet to the slab, and she was not able to utter a word. And there she and Pryderi remained un-

til it became night, when lo, there came peals of thunder upon them, and a fall of mist, and thereupon the castle vanished and they with it.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW MANAWYDDAN RESCUED PRYDERI AND RHIANNON

NOW when Kicva, the wife of Pryderi, saw no one in the palace but herself and Manawyddan, she feared that harm might befall her, and she sorrowed so that she cared not whether she lived or died. But Manawyddan comforted her, saying to her that he would be a true friend to her as long as he lived.

"Heaven reward thee," she said, "and of this I felt assured." And then the lady took courage and was comforted.

Then Manawyddan said, "It is not fitting, lady, for us to stay here, for we have lost our dogs and cannot get food. Let us go unto Llogyr, for it is easiest for us to find support there."

"Gladly, lord," she said, "we will do so."

And so they set forth together to Llogyr. As they journeyed on their way, he said, "What craft shall we follow there?"

"Take up one that is seemly," she replied.

"None other will I take," he answered, "than that of making shoes, as I did formerly."

"Lord," said she, "such a craft becomes not a man so nobly born as thou."

"By that, however, will I abide," said he.

So he began his craft, and he made all his work of the finest leather he could get in town, and as he had done at the other place, he caused gilded clasps to be made for the shoes. And soon nearly all the cordwainers in the town were idle, except himself, and without work. For as long as they could be had from him, neither shoes nor hose were bought elsewhere. And thus they tarried there a year, until the cordwainers became envious of him and resolved to slay him. And when he heard of this he made ready to go back to Dyved.

Now when he set out to return to Dyved, he took with him a sack of wheat. And they came to Narberth, and there they dwelt. And he was glad in his heart when he saw Narberth again, and the lands where he had been wont to hunt with Pryderi and with Rhiannon. And he found a living for himself and Kicva by fishing and by hunting the deer in the forest. And then he began to prepare some ground and to plant it with the wheat he had brought with him; and in a while it grew so that no man ever saw fairer wheat than it.

And thus passed the season of the year until the harvest came. On a certain day he went and looked at one of his fields, and behold it was ripe and ready for reaping. "I will reap this to-morrow," said he. And that night he went back to Narberth.

On the morrow at the gray dawn he went to

reap the field, and when he came there he found nothing but the bare straw. Every one of the ears of wheat was cut from off the stalk, and all the ears carried entirely away, and nothing but the straw was left. And at this he marvelled greatly.

Then he went to look at another field, and behold that was also ripe and ready for reaping. "Verily," said he, "this will I reap to-morrow." And on the morrow he came with the intent to reap it, but when he came he found nothing but the bare straw.

"Oh, gracious Heaven," he exclaimed, "I know that whatsoever has begun my ruin is completing it."

Then he went to look at the third field, and when he came there, finer wheat he had never seen, and this was also ripe and ready to be reaped. "Evil betide me if I watch not here to-night," he said. "Whosoever carried off the other corn will come in like manner to take this; and I will know who it is." And he told Kicva all that had befallen.

"Verily," said she, "what thinkest thou to do?"

"I will watch the field to-night," said he. So he took his arms and began to watch the field.

And at midnight, lo, there arose a loud tumult. And he looked and beheld a mighty host of mice, so great that it could not be numbered or measured. And the mice made their way into the field, and each one climbed up a stalk and bending it down with its weight, cut off one of the ears of

wheat and carried it away, leaving there the bare stalk. And so great was the number of mice that he saw not a single straw that had not a mouse on it. And they all took their way from the field, carrying the ears with them.

Then in wrath and anger did he rush upon the mice, but he could no more come up with them than if they had been gnats or birds, except one only which could not run as fast as the others, though he could hardly overtake it. And after this one he went, and he caught it and put it in his glove, and tied up the opening of the glove with a string, and kept it with him, and returned to the palace. Then he came to the hall where Kicva was, and he lighted a fire, and hung the glove by the string upon a peg.

"What hast thou there, lord?" said Kicva.

"A thief," said he, "that I found robbing me."

"What kind of a thief may it be, lord, that thou canst put it in a glove?" said she.

"Behold, I will tell thee," he answered.

Then he showed her how his fields had been wasted and destroyed, and how the mice came to the last of his fields in his sight. "And one of them was less nimble than the rest, and is now in my glove; and to-morrow I will hang it; and before Heaven, if I had them, I would hang them all."

"My lord," she answered, "this is marvelous; but yet it would be unseemly for a man of dignity like thee to be hanging such a reptile as this. And

if thou dost right, thou wilt not meddle with the creature but wilt let it go."

"Woe betide me," he said, "if I would not hang them all if I could catch them, and such as I have I will hang."

"Verily, lord," said she, "there is no reason that I should succor this reptile, except to prevent discredit unto thee. Do, therefore, lord, as thou wilt."

Then Manawyddan went up on a small hill at Narberth, taking the mouse with him. And he sat up two forks on the highest part of the hill. And while he was doing this he saw a scholar coming toward him dressed in old and tattered garments. And it was now seven years since he had seen in that place either man or beast, except those four persons who had remained together until two of them were lost.

"My lord," said the scholar, "good day to thee."

"My greeting also unto thee," Manawyddan said; "whence dost thou come?"

"Truly, lord," said he, "I came from Llogyr, and go through this land unto my own. But what work art thou upon, lord?"

"I am hanging a thief that I caught robbing me," he replied.

"What manner of thief is that?" asked the scholar. "I see a creature in thy hand like unto a mouse, and ill does it become a man of rank such

as thou art to touch a reptile such as this. Let it go forth free."

"I will not let it go free, by Heaven," said he, "for I caught it robbing me, and the doom of a thief I will inflict upon it, and I will hang it."

"Lord," said the scholar, "rather than see a man of thy rank at such a work, I will give thee a pound which I have received as alms, to let the reptile go forth free."

"I will not let it go free," said he, "by Heaven; neither will I sell it." So the scholar went on his way.

As he was placing the crossbeam upon the two forks, behold a priest came towards him upon a horse covered with trappings. "Good day to thee, lord," said the priest.

"Heaven prosper thee," said Manawyddan; "and I crave thy blessing."

"The blessing of Heaven be upon thee," said the priest; "and what, lord, art thou doing?"

"I am hanging a thief that I caught robbing me," he said.

"What manner of thief is it, lord?" he inquired.

"A creature," he answered, "in the form of a mouse. It has been robbing me, and I am inflicting upon it the doom of a thief."

"Lord," said the priest, "rather than see thee touch this reptile I would purchase its freedom."

Then he offered Manawyddan three pounds for

the mouse, but he said, "I will not sell it for any price." So the priest went his way.

Then he noosed the string about the mouse's neck; and as he was about to draw it up, behold he saw a bishop's retinue with his horses and attendants. And the bishop came toward him, saying, "Heaven's blessing be upon thee; what work art thou upon?"

"Hanging a thief that I caught robbing me," he replied.

"Is that not a mouse I see in thy hand?" said the bishop.

"Yes," answered he, "and she has robbed me."

"Ay," said the bishop, "since I have come at the doom of this reptile, I will ransom it of thee."

Then the bishop offered him seven pounds as a ransom for the mouse, saying "I would not see a man of thy rank destroying so vile a reptile as this. Let it loose and thou shalt have the money."

And when Manawyddan refused to set the mouse free, he said, "I will give thee four and twenty pounds of ready money to set it free."

And when he still refused, the bishop said, "I will give thee all the horses that thou seest in this plain, and the seven loads of baggage, and the seven horses that they are upon."

And still Manawyddan replied, "By Heaven, I will not set the mouse free."

Then the bishop said, "Since thou wilt not do so for this, do so at whatever price thou wilt."

"I will do so," Manawyddan said, "If thou wilt set Rhiannon and Pryderi free."

"That shalt thou have," the bishop answered.

"Not yet will I loose the mouse, by Heaven."

"What then wouldst thou?" said the bishop.

"That the charm and the illusion be removed from the seven Cantrevs of Dyved."

"This shalt thou also have," said the bishop; set therefore the mouse free."

"I will not set it free, by Heaven," said he. "I will know who the mouse may be."

"She is my wife," said the bishop.

"Even though she be thy wife I will not set her free. Wherefore came she to me?"

"To despoil thee," the bishop answered.

Then the bishop told him that he was Llwyd, the son of Kilcoed, and had cast the charm over the seven Cantrevs of Dyved in revenge upon Pryderi for the game of Badger in the Bag. "And when it was known that thou wast come to dwell in the land, at the request of my household I transformed them into mice that they might destroy thy corn. And it was my own household that went the first and the second night, and the third night my wife and the ladies of the court besought me to transform them, which I did, and had my wife not been so stout and heavy you could not have caught her. But since this has taken place and she has been caught, I will restore thee Pryderi and Rhiannon,

and I will take the charm and the illusion from off Dyved. So therefore set her free."

"I will not yet set her free, by Heaven," he said.

"What wilt thou more?" said the bishop.

"I will see that there be no more charm upon the seven Cantrevs of Dyved."

"This shalt thou have," the bishop said, "now set her free."

"I will not, by my faith," he answered.

"What wilt thou have furthermore?" the bishop asked.

"I will," he replied, "that vengeance be never taken for this, either on Pryderi or Rhiannon or upon me."

"All this shalt thou have," said the bishop; "now set her free."

"I will not, by Heaven," he said, "until I see Pryderi and Rhiannon with me free."

"Behold here they come," the bishop answered.

And thereupon behold Pryderi and Rhiannon appeared coming toward him. And he rose up to meet them, and greeted them, and took them by the hands and seated them and sat down beside them; and so also did Kicva. And the joy of that meeting no words can describe.

Then the bishop said, "Ah, Chieftain, set now my wife at liberty for thou hast received all that thou didst ask."

"I will release her gladly," said Manawyddan; and thereupon he set her free. Then Llwyd

struck her with a magic wand, and she was changed back into a young woman, one of the fairest that was ever seen.

Then the bishop said, "Look around upon thy land, and thou wilt see it all tilled and peopled, as it was in its best state."

And Manawyddan rose up and looked forth; and when he looked he saw all the lands tilled and full of herds and dwellings. And there was rejoicing among them all both high and low; and no more charms were ever placed upon that land; and peace and plenty and quiet and happiness dwelt with them all as long as they lived.

**This story indicates the vivid imagination and the taste of the early people of Wales for tales of magic and enchantment. The Prince who figures as the hero of the story is the subject of two Welsh poems, in one of which he is spoken of as the maker of golden shoes, and in the other as a minstrel who on account of the captivity of his brother Poran would not afterward resume his princely rank, although he might have done so.**

# The Dream of Maxen Wledig

## Chapter I

### The Dream of the Emperor Maxen Wledig

ALONG time ago Maxen Wledig was emperor of Rome; and he was a better and a wiser ruler than any emperor before him. One day he held a council of the kings of the land and he said to them, "I desire to go tomorrow to hunt."

So the next day in the morning he set forth with his retinue, and soon came to the valley of the river that flowed through Rome; and he hunted through the valley until mid-day. And with him were two and thirty crowned kings, all of whom were his vassals. Now the purpose of the emperor was not so much for the delight of hunting as to put himself on equal terms with those kings and thus win their friendship.

Soon the sun was high in the sky over their heads, and the heat was very great; and a feeling of sleep came upon Maxen Wledig. As his attendants saw it they stood and set up their shields around him upon the shafts of their spears to protect him from the sun, and they placed a gold en-

amelled shield under his head; and so the Emperor Maxen slept.

As he slept, he had a dream; and this is what he saw in his dream. He was journeying along the valley of the river towards its source; and he came to the highest mountain in the world. And he thought that the mountain was as high as the sky; and when he came over the mountain, it seemed to him that he went through the fairest and most level regions that man ever yet beheld. And he saw large and mighty rivers descending from the mountain to the sea, and he proceeded towards the mouths of the rivers.

As he journeyed thus, he came to the mouth of the largest river he had ever seen. At the entrance of the river he beheld a great city and in the city a vast castle with many high towers of various colors. At the mouth of the river he saw a fleet, the largest he had ever seen before. And he saw one ship among the fleet which was larger and fairer than all the others. Of such part of the ship as he could see above the water, one plank was gilded and the other silvered over, both shining with great brightness. And as he looked he saw a bridge of the bone of a whale reaching from the land to the ship; and he thought that he went along the bridge, and came into the ship. And a sail was hoisted on the ship, and along the sea and the ocean it was swiftly borne.

Then it seemed that he came to the fairest island

in the whole world, and leaving the ship he traversed the island from sea to sea, even to the furthest shore of the island. And there he saw valleys and steeps, and rocks of wondrous height, and rugged precipices; such as he had never seen the like before. And thence he beheld an island in the sea, facing this rugged land. And between him and this island was a country of which the plain was as large as the sea, and the mountain as vast as the wood. And from the mountain he saw a river that flowed through the land and fell into the sea. And at the mouth of the river he beheld a castle, the fairest that man ever saw; and the gate of the castle was open, and he went into the castle.

In the castle he saw a fair hall, of which the roof seemed to be all gold, the walls seemed to be entirely of precious gems, and the doors all seemed to be of gold. There were also golden seats in the hall, and silver tables. And on a seat opposite to him, he beheld two auburn haired youths playing at chess; and they had a silver board for the chess, and golden pieces thereon. The garments of the youths were of jet black satin, and chaplets of ruddy gold bound their hair, whereon were sparkling jewels of great price,—rubies and gems alternately with imperial stones. Buskins of new Cordovan leather were on their feet, fastened by slides of red gold.

And beside a pillar in the hall, he saw a hoary-headed man of powerful aspect, seated in a chair of

ivory, with the figures of two eagles of ruddy gold thereon. Bracelets of gold were upon his arms, and many rings were on his hands, and a golden torque about his neck; and his hair was bound with a golden diadem. A chess board of gold was before him, and a rod of gold and a steel file were in his hand. And he was carving out chess men.

And he saw a maiden sitting before him in a chair of ruddy gold; and so great was her beauty that it was even more easy to gaze upon the sun when brightest in the heavens than upon her. A vest of white silk was upon the maiden, with clasps of red gold at the breast; and a surcoat of gold tissue was upon her, and a frontlet of red gold was upon her head, and rubies and gems were in the frontlet, alternating with pearls and imperial stones. And a girdle of ruddy gold was around her waist. Indeed, she was the fairest sight that ever man beheld.

As the maiden saw him she arose from her chair before him, and he threw his arms about her neck, and they two sat down together in the chair of gold; and the chair was not less roomy for them both than for the maiden alone. And as he sat thus with his arms about the maiden's neck, behold, through the chafing of the dogs at their leashing, and the clashing of the shields as they struck against one another, and the beating together of the shafts of the spears, and the neighing and the prancing of the horses, the emperor awoke.

When he awoke, neither spirit nor life was left in him, because of the maiden whom he had seen in his sleep, for the love of the maiden pervaded his whole frame. Seeing this his household spake unto him, saying, "Lord, is it not past the time for thee to take thy food?" Thereupon the emperor breathed a deep sigh and mounted his palfrey, the saddest man that mortal ever saw, and went forth toward Rome.

And thus he was during the space of a whole week. When they of the household went to drink wine and mead out of golden vessels, he went not with any of them. When they went to listen to songs and tales, he went not with them there; neither could he be persuaded to do anything but sleep. And as often as he slept, he beheld in his dreams the maiden who had thus bewitched his heart; but except when he slept he saw nothing of her; and he knew not where in the world she was.

One day the page of the chamber spake unto him; now, although he was page of the chamber, he was a king of the Romans. "Lord," said he, "all the people revile thee."

"Wherefore do they revile me?" asked the emperor.

"Because they can get neither message nor answer from thee as men should have from their lord. This is the cause why thou art spoken evil of."

"Youth," said the emperor, "do thou bring unto

me the wise men of Rome, and I will tell them wherefore I am sorrowful."

Then the wise men of Rome were brought to the emperor, and he spake to them. "Sages of Rome," said he, "I have seen a dream. And in the dream I beheld a maiden, and because of the maiden is there neither life, nor spirit, nor existence within me."

"Lord," they answered, "since thou judgest us worthy to counsel thee, we will give thee counsel. And this is our counsel; that thou send messengers for three years to three parts of the world, to seek the object of thy dream. And as thou knowest not what day or what night good news may come to thee, the hope thereof will support thee."

So the messengers journeyed for the space of a year, wandering about the world, and seeking tidings concerning his dream. But when they came back at the end of the year, they knew not one word more than they did the day they set forth. And then was the emperor exceedingly sorrowful, for he thought that he should never have tidings of the maiden whose beauty had enchanted his heart.

Then spake one of the kings of the Romans unto the emperor. "Lord," said he, "go forth to hunt by the way thou didst seem to go, whether it were to the east or to the west."

So the emperor went forth to the hunt, going in the direction of the stream. And anon he came

to the bank of the river. "Behold," said he, "this is where I was when I saw the dream, and I went towards the source of the river westward."

And thereupon thirteen messengers of the emperor set forth, and before them they saw a high mountain which seemed to them to touch the sky. Now this was the guise in which the messengers journeyed; one sleeve was on the cap of each of them in front, as a sign that they were messengers, in order that through what hostile land soever they might pass no harm might be done them. And when they were come over the mountain, they beheld vast plains and large rivers flowing through them. "Behold," said they, "the land which our master saw."

And they went along the mouths of the rivers, until they came to a mighty river flowing toward the sea; and there was a vast city and a castle in it with many colored high towers in the castle. And there they saw the largest fleet in the world, in the harbor of the river, and one ship that was larger than any of the others. "Behold, again," said they, "the dream that our master saw."

And they entered the great ship and crossed the sea, and came to the Island of Britain. And they traversed the island until they came to Snowdon. "Behold," said they, "the rugged land that our master saw."

And they went forward again until they saw Anglesey before them, and until they saw Arvon

likewise. "Behold," said they, "the land our master saw in his sleep."

And they saw Aber Sain, and a castle at the mouth of the river. The portal of the castle saw they open, and into the castle they went, and they saw a hall in the castle. Then said they, "Behold, the hall which he saw in his sleep."

They went into the hall and beheld there two youths playing at chess on the golden bench. And they saw the hoary-headed man beside the pillar, in the ivory chair, carving chessmen. And there before them they beheld the maiden sitting in a chair of ruddy gold.

Then the messengers bent down upon their knees, and said, "Empress of Rome, all hail!"

"Ha, gentles," said the maiden, "ye bear the seeming of honorable men, and the badge of envoys; what mockery is this ye do to me?"

"We mock thee not, lady; but the Emperor of Rome hath seen thee in his sleep, and he has neither life nor spirit left because of thee. Thou shalt have of us therefore the choice, lady, whether thou wilt go with us and be made Empress of Rome, or that the emperor come hither and take thee for his wife?"

"Ha, lords," said the maiden, "I will not deny what ye say, neither will I believe it too eagerly. If the emperor loves me, let him come here to seek me."

Then by day and by night the messengers hied

them back to Rome. And when their horses failed, they bought other fresh ones and thus hastened on their way. And when they came to Rome they saluted the emperor and told him what they had seen. "We will be thy guides, lord," said they, "over sea and over land, to the place where is the woman whom best thou lovest, for we know her name, and her kindred, and her race." Then they asked their boon, which was given to them according as they named it.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW THE EMPEROR FOUND THE OBJECT OF HIS DREAM

NOW immediately the emperor set forth with his army; and these men were his guides. Towards Britain they went, over the sea and the deep. And the emperor knew the land when he saw it, for it was as in his dream. And when the men of that land rose against him, he conquered the island from Beli, the son of Manogan, and his sons, and drove them to the sea, and went forward even unto Arvon. And when he beheld the castle of Aber Sain, he said, "Look yonder, there is the castle wherein I saw the damsel whom best I love."

And he went forward into the castle and into the hall, and there he saw Kynan, the son of Eudav, and Adeon, the son of Eudav, playing at chess. And he saw Eudav, the son of Caradawc, sitting on a chair of ivory, carving chessmen. And the maiden whom he had beheld in his sleep, he saw sitting in a chair of gold.

"Empress of Rome," said he, "all hail!" And the emperor threw his arms about her neck; and that night she became his bride.

And the next day in the morning, the damsel asked her maiden portion; and the emperor told

her to name what she would. And she asked to have the Island of Britain for her father, from the channel to the Irish Sea, together with the three adjacent lands, to hold under the Empress of Rome; and to have three chief castles made for her, in whatever places she might choose in the Island of Britain. To this the emperor agreed; and she choose to have the highest castle made at Arvon. And they brought thither earth from Rome that it might be more healthful for the emperor to sleep and sit and walk upon. After that the two other castles were made for her, which were Caerleon and Caermarthen.

And one day the emperor went to hunt at Caermarthen, and he came so far as the top of Brevi Vawr, and there the emperor pitched his tent. And that encamping place is called Cadeir Maxen, even to this day. And because that he built the castle with a myriad of men, he called it Caervyrddin. Then Helen, the empress, bethought her to make high roads from one castle to another throughout the Island of Britain; and the roads were made. And for this cause are they called the roads of Helen Luyddawc, for the men of the Island of Britain would not have made these great roads for any save for her.

Seven years did the emperor tarry in this island. Now, at that time, the men of Rome had a custom, that whatsoever emperor should remain in other lands more than seven years, should remain to his

own overthrow, and should never return to Rome again. So they made a new emperor; and he wrote a letter of threat to Maxen. There was nought in the letter but only this: "If thou comest, and if thou ever comest to Rome." This letter came to Maxen at Caerleon, and these tidings.

Then sent he a letter to the man who styled himself emperor of Rome. There was nought in that letter also but only this: "If I come to Rome, and if I come."

Thereupon Maxen set forth towards Rome with his army; and on his way he vanquished France and Burgundy, and every other land through which he passed. At length he reached the city of Rome, which was now in the hands of the usurper.

For a whole year the emperor was before the city and though he made frequent attacks upon it, he was no nearer taking it than on the first day of his arrival. At the beginning of the second year there came to visit him the brothers of Helen Luyddawc from the Island of Britain, and a small host with them. Though the host was few in numbers yet they were better warriors than twice as many Romans. The emperor was told that a host was seen halting close to his army and encamping; and as he looked upon them he thought that no man ever saw a fairer or better appointed host for its size nor more handsome standards.

When Helen, the empress, heard of the arrival of the stranger band she went out to look upon

them, and she knew the standards of her brothers, and she told the emperor who they were. And Kynan, the son of Eudav, and Adeon, the son of Eudav, came to meet the emperor; and the emperor was glad because of them and gave them fitting welcome and embraced them.

On the morrow as the Romans renewed their attack upon the city the men of Britain looked upon the battle and observed the defense. And Kynan said to his brothers, "We will try to attack the city more expertly than this." So they measured by night the height of the wall, and they sent their carpenters to the woods to prepare long and slender poles out of which they made a ladder for every four men of their number.

Now it was that very day at midday the two emperors went to meat, and they ceased to fight on both sides till all had finished eating. So in the morning the men of Britain took their food, and they drank until they were strong and ready for the attack. And while the two emperors were at meat, the Britons came to the city and placed their ladders againt the wall, and forthwith they mounted their ladders and entered the city.

So sudden was the attack that the new emperor had no time to arm himself, and so they fell upon him and slew him and many others with him. And three nights and three days were they subduing the men that were in the city and taking the castle. And others of them kept the city, lest any of

of the host of Maxen should come therein, until they had subjected all to their will.

Then spake Maxen to Helen Luyddawc, and said, "I marvel, lady, that thy brothers have not conquered this city for me."

"Lord, emperor, she answered, "the wisest youths in the world are my brothers. Go thou thither and ask the city of them, and if it be in their possession thou shalt have it gladly."

So the emperor and Helen went and demanded the city of the Britons. And they told the emperor that none had taken the city and that none could give it to him, but the men of the Island of Britain. Then the gates of the city of Rome were opened, and the emperor entered it with great pomp and sat on the throne, and all the men of Rome submitted themselves unto him.

The emperor then said unto Kynan and Adeon, "Lords," said he, "I have now possession of the whole of my empire, and no longer need the aid of my brave warriors. This host I give unto you to vanquish whatever region you may desire in all the world. And whatever lands you may conquer those you may occupy and your descendants forever."

So they set forth with a great host of warriors and conquered many lands and castles and cities. And they slew all the men of these lands, but the women they kept alive for the wives of the warriors. And thus they continued until the young

men who had come with them were grown gray-headed, from the length of time they were upon this conquest.

Then spoke Kynan unto Adeon, his brother, saying, "Wilt thou rather tarry in this land, or go back unto the land whence thou didst come forth?"

And Adeon answered, "I will go back to my own land."

So he chose to go back to his own land, and many of his people went with him. But Kynan tarried in the country and settled there in a part that is now called the land of Brittany. And they took counsel and cut out the tongues of all the women they had captured so that they could not talk and thus corrupt the speech of their captors. And because of the silence of the women from their own speech the language of the Britons was preserved, and there you can hear it spoken unto this day.

And this is called the Dream of Maxen Wledig, Emperor of Rome. And here it ends.

**Maxen Wledig is supposed to be the Emperor Maximus, A. D. 383, who was in Britain with his army when he obtained the throne. Many stories about him were current among the people of Wales. It is said that he rendered part of Britain desolate by transporting many of the people into Gaul, where they are supposed to have formed the Breton immigration. He was put to death after having been defeated by Theodosius and Valentinian the Younger, in 388 A. D.**

# The Story of Lludd and Llevelys

MANY years ago in Wales lived a king named Beli the Great. He had three sons, Lludd, Caswallawn and Nynyaw, and also a younger son named Llevelys. After the death of Beli, the kingdom of the Island of Britain fell into the hands of Lludd, his eldest son. He was a great warrior and ruled prosperously, and rebuilt the walls of London, and encompassed the city with numberless towers. He also bade the citizens build houses therein, such as no houses in the kingdom could equal in size and beauty. And though he had many castles and cities, he loved this city more than any other; and he dwelt therein most of the year. Therefore it was called Caer Lludd, and at last Caer London.

Now Lludd loved Llevelys best of all his brothers, because he was a wise and discreet man. Having heard that the King of France had died, leaving no heir except a daughter, and that he had left all his possessions in her hands, Llevelys came to

Lludd his brother to beseech his counsel whether he might go to France to woo the maiden for his wife. And he did this, not so much for his own welfare as to seek to add to the glory and honor and dignity of his kindred.

This proposal was pleasing to the king, so Llevelys prepared ships, and filled them with armed knights, and set forth towards France. As soon as they had landed, they sent messengers to the nobles of France to explain the cause of the embassy. And through the counsel of the nobles of France and of the princes, the maiden was given to Llevelys, and the crown of the kingdom with her. And thenceforth he ruled the land discreetly and wisely and happily as long as he lived.

Now it happened on a time that three plagues fell on the Island of Britain, such as none in the islands had ever seen the like of before. The first was a certain race that came, called the Coranions; and so great was their knowledge, that there was no discourse upon the face of the island, however low it might be spoken, but that if the wind met it, it was known to them. And through this knowledge they could not be injured.

The second plague was a shriek which came on every May-eve to every home in the Island of Britain. So loud was the shriek that it went through the people's hearts, and scared them so greatly that the men lost their hue and their strength, and the young men and the maidens lost

their senses, and all the animals and trees, and the earth and the waters, were left barren.

The third plague was, that however much food and provisions might be prepared in the king's courts, none of it could ever be found, except what was consumed in the first night. Of these two plagues no one ever knew the cause, therefore there seemed better hope of being freed from the first than from the second and third.

Now King Lludd felt great sorrow and care, because that he knew not how he might be freed from these plagues. So he called to him all the nobles of his kingdom, and asked counsel of them what they should do against these afflictions. Then by the common counsel of the nobles it was thought best for King Lludd to go to Llevelys, his brother, King of France, for he was a man great of counsel and wisdom, to seek his advice.

Soon they made ready a fleet, and that in secret and in silence, that no one should know the cause of their errand besides the king and his counsellors. When they were ready, they went into their ships, Lludd and those whom he chose to go with him. And they began to cleave the seas towards France.

Now when these tidings came to Llevelys, seeing that he knew not the cause of his brother's ships, he came from the other side to meet him, and with him was a fleet vast of size. When Lludd saw this, he left all the ships out upon the sea except one only; and in that one he came to meet

his brother, and he likewise with a single ship came to meet him. When they were come together, each put his arms about the other's neck, and they welcomed each other with brotherly love.

When Lludd had shown his brother the cause of his errand, Llevelys said that he himself knew the cause of his coming to visit him. So they took counsel together to discourse on the matter in a manner that the wind might not catch their words, nor the Coranians know what they might say. For this purpose Llevelys caused a long horn to be made of brass, and through this horn they discoursed together; but whatsoever words they spoke through this horn, one to the other, neither of them could hear any other but harsh and hostile words. When Llevelys saw this, and that there was a demon thwarting them, and disturbing them through this horn, he caused wine to be put therein to cleanse it. And through the virtue of the wine the demon was driven out of the horn.

Now when their discourse was unobstructed, Llevelys told his brother that he would give him some insects, whereof he should keep some to breed; and the others he should take and bruise in water. And he assured him that the mixture would have power to destroy the race of the Coranians. He also advised him that when he came home to his kingdom, he should call together all the people, both of his own race and of the race of the Coranians, for a conference, as though with

the intent of making peace between them, and that when they were all together he should take this charmed water, and cast it over all alike. And he assured him that the water would poison the race of the Coranians, but that it would not slay or harm those of his own race.

"As for the second plague," said he, "that is in thy dominion, behold that is a dragon. And another dragon of a foreign race is fighting with it, and striving to overcome it; and therefore does your dragon make a fearful outcry. And on this wise thou mayest come to know this. After thou hast returned home, cause the island to be measured in its length and breadth; and in the place where thou dost find the exact central point, cause there a pit to be dug, and cause a caldron full of the best mead that can be made to be put in the pit, with a covering of satin over the face of the caldron. And then do thou thyself remain there watching, and thou wilt see the dragons fighting in the form of terrific animals. As they fight they will take the form of dragons in the air; and after wearying themselves with fierce and furious fighting, they will fall, in the form of two pigs, upon the covering, and they will sink in, and the covering with them, and they will draw it down to the very bottom of the caldron. Then they will drink up the whole of the mead; and after that they will sleep. Thereupon do thou immediately fold the covering around them, and bury them in a

kistvaen in the strongest place thou hast in thy dominions, and hide them in the earth. And as long as they shall abide in that strong place, no plague shall come to the Island of Britain from elsewhere.

"The cause of the third plague," said he, "is a mighty man of magic, who takes thy meat and thy drink and thy provisions. And it is through illusions and charms that he causes every one to sleep. Therefore it is needful for thee in thy own person to watch thy food and thy drink and thy provisions. And lest he should overcome thee with sleep, let there be a caldron of cold water by thy side; and when thou art oppressed with sleep, plunge into the caldron."

Then Lludd returned again unto his own country. And immediately he summoned to him the whole of his own people and also the Coranians. And, as Llevelys had taught him, he bruised the insects in water, and cast the water over them all together, and forthwith it destroyed the whole tribe of the Coranians, without hurt to any of the Britons.

Soon after this Lludd caused the island to be measured in its length and in its breadth. The central point was found in Oxford, and in that place he caused a pit to be dug in the earth, and in that pit a caldron to be set full of the best mead that could be made, and a covering of satin placed over the face of it. And he himself watched that

night; and while he was watching, he beheld the dragons fighting. And when they were weary with their conflict they fell, and came down upon the top of the satin, and drew it with them to the bottom of the caldron. And when they had drunk the mead they slept. As they slept Ludd folded the covering around them, and in the securest place he had in Snowdon he hid them in a kistvaen. After that, this spot was called Dinas Emrys, but before that, Dinas Ffaraon. And thus the fierce outcry ceased in his dominions.

Now when this was ended, King Ludd caused an exceedingly great banquet to be prepared. And when it was ready, he placed a vessel of cold water by his side, and he in his own person watched it. As he abode thus clad with arms, about the third watch of the night, lo, he heard many surpassing fascinations and various songs. And drowsiness urged him to sleep; but lest he should be hindered from his purpose, and be overcome by sleep, he went often into the water. At last, behold a man of vast size, clad in strong, heavy armor, came in, bearing a hamper. And as he was wont, he put all the food and provisions of meat and drink into the hamper, and proceeded to go forth with it. And nothing was ever more wonderful to Ludd than that the hamper should hold so much.

Thereupon King Ludd went after him, and spoke unto him thus: "Stop, stop," said he, "though thou hast done many insults and much

spoil erewhile, thou shalt not do so any more, unless thy skill in arms and thy prowess be greater than mine."

Then the giant instantly put down the hamper on the floor, and awaited him. And a fierce battle was fought between them, so that the glittering fire flew out from their arms. At the last Lludd grappled with him, and fate bestowed the victory on the king; and he threw the plague to the earth. And after he had overcome him by strength and might the giant besought his mercy.

"How can I grant thee mercy," said the king, "after all the many injuries and wrongs that thou hast done me?"

"For all the losses that ever I have caused thee," said he, "I will make thee an atonement equal to what I have taken. And I will never do the like from this time forth, but will be thy faithful vassal."

The king accepted this promise and granted mercy to him. And thus the land was delivered from all the plagues that had disturbed it, by the wisdom of Llevelys and the valor of King Lludd. And from that time until the end of his life did Lludd rule over the Island of Britain.

**Lludd is the celebrated King Lludd, brother to Cæsar's great opponent Cassibelaunis. Geoffrey of Monmouth, in his history of the Britons, records his fortifying and decorating the city in nearly the same terms as the Mabinogi, stating that it was from him called Caerlud, afterward corrupted into Caer London, then into London, and lastly by the foreigners into Londres.**

Among the Welsh legends one of the most curious is that of the imprisonment of the Dragons in Dinas Emrys in Snowdon. This story is related by Geoffrey, and it is found in Nennius, who wrote in the eighth century, and of whose works some copies as old as the tenth century are still extant. The red dragon has long been the natural standard of the Welsh, and was borne by Henry VII at Bosworth field.

# Llew Llaw and his Wife

## Chapter I

### How Llew Llaw got his Name and his Wife.

MANY years ago, Math, son of Mathony, was lord over Gwynedd; and Gwydion was his brother. As Gwydion lay one morning upon his bed, he heard a cry in the chest at his feet; and though it was not loud, it was such that he could hear it distinctly. Then he arose in haste, and opened the chest; and when he opened it, he beheld an infant boy stretching out his arms from the folds of the scarf, and casting it aside. Taking up the boy in his arms, he carried him to a place where he knew there was a woman that could nurse him. And he agreed with the woman that she should take charge of the boy. And she nursed him that year.

At the end of the year he seemed by his size as though he were two years old. And the second year he was so large that he was able to go to the court by himself. When he came to the court, Gwydion noticed him, and the boy became familiar with him, and loved him better than any one else. So the boy was reared at the court until he was

four years old, when he was as big as an ordinary boy eight years old.

One day Gwydion walked forth, and the boy followed him; and he went to the Castle of Arianrod, having the boy with him. And when he came into the court, Arianrod, the owner of the castle, arose to meet him, and greeted him, and bade him welcome.

"Heaven prosper thee," said Gwydion.

"What is the name of the boy you have with you?" said Arianrod.

"Verily," he replied, "he has not yet a name."

"Well," she said, "I lay this destiny upon him, that he shall never have a name until he receives one from me."

"Heaven bears me witness," answered he, "that thou art a wicked woman. But the boy shall have a name, however displeasing it may be unto thee." And thereupon he went forth in wrath, and returned to Caer Dathyl, and there he tarried that night.

The next day he arose and took the boy with him, and went to walk on the seashore between that place and Aber Menei. And there he saw some sedges and seaweed, and he gathered some of them and turned them into a boat. And out of dry sticks and sedges he made some Cordovan leather; and he colored it in such a manner that no one ever saw leather more beautiful than it. Then he made a sail to the boat, and he and the

And when he came into the court Arianrod arose to meet him

boy went in it to the port of the Castle of Arianrod. And there he began making shoes, and stitching them, until he was observed from the castle. Now when he knew that they of the castle were observing him, he disguised himself and the boy, so that they might not be known.

When Arianrod saw them, she said, "What men are those in yonder boat?"

"They are cordwainers," they answered.

"Go and see what kind of leather they have, and what kind of work they can do," said she.

So they came unto them, and found Gwydion coloring some Cordovan leather, and gilding it. And the messengers came and told her this.

"Well," said she, "take the measure of my foot, and bid the cordwainer to make shoes for me."

So Gwydion made a pair of shoes for her, yet not according to the measure, but larger. The shoes were then brought unto her, and behold they were too large.

"These are too large," said she; "but he shall receive their value. Bid him also to make some that are smaller than these."

Then he made her another pair of shoes that were much smaller than her feet, and sent them unto her.

"Tell him," she said, "that these are too small and will not go on my feet." And they told him this.

"Verily," said he, "I will not make her any more

shoes unless I see her foot." And this was told unto her.

"Truly," she answered, "then I will go unto him."

So she went down to the boat, and when she came there he was shaping shoes, and the boy was stitching them.

"Ah, lady," said he, "good day to thee."

"Heaven prosper thee," said she. "I marvel that thou canst not manage to make shoes according to measure."

"I could not," he replied; "but now I shall be able."

Thereupon behold a wren stood upon the deck of the boat; and the boy shot at it, and hit it in the leg between the sinew and the bone. At this the lady smiled and said, "Verily, with a steady hand did the lion aim at it."

"Heaven reward thee not; but now has he got a name. And a good enough name it is. Llew Llaw Gyffes he shall be called henceforth, for that is the meaning of thy words."

Then all the work disappeared in seaweed and sedges, and he went on with it no further. And for that reason was he called the third Gold-shoemaker.

"Of a truth," said Arianrod, "thou wilt not thrive the better for doing evil unto me."

"I have done thee no evil yet," answered

Gwydion. Then he restored the boy to his own form.

"Well," said she, "I will lay a destiny upon this boy, that he shall never have arms and armor until I invest him with them."

"By Heaven," said he, "let thy malice be what it may, he shall have arms."

Then they went towards Dinas Dinllev, and there he brought up Llew Llaw Gyffes until he could manage any horse, and he was perfect in features and strength and stature. And when Gwydion saw that he languished through the want of horses and arms, he called him unto him, and said, "Ah, youth, we will go to-morrow on an errand together. Be therefore more cheerful than thou art."

"That I will," said the youth.

Next morning, at the dawn of day, they arose; and they took their way along the seacoast, up towards Bryn Aryen. And at the top of Cevn Clydno they equipped themselves with horses, and went toward the Castle of Arianrod. And they changed their form, and rode towards the gate in the semblance of two youths; but the aspect of Gwydion was more staid than that of the other.

"Porter," said he, "go thou in and say that there are here two bards from Glamorgan."

So the porter went in, and told him as he was bidden.

"The welcome of Heaven be unto them. Let them in," said Arianrod.

As they entered they were greeted with great joy; and soon the hall was arranged, and they went to meat. When meat was ended, Arianrod discoursed with Gwydion of tales and stories, for Gwydion was an excellent teller of tales. And when it was time to leave off feasting and the telling of tales, a chamber was prepared for them, and they went to rest.

In the early twilight Gwydion arose, and he called unto him his magic and his power of enchantment. And by the time that the day dawned, there resounded through the land a great uproar, and trumpets and shouts. When it was now day, they heard a knocking at the door of the chamber, and therewith Arianrod asking that it might be opened. So up rose the youth and opened the door unto her, and she entered, and a maiden with her.

"Ah, good men," she said, "in an evil plight are we."

"Yes, truly," said Gwydion, "we have heard trumpets, and shouts. What thinkest thou that they may mean?"

"Verily," said she, "we cannot see the color of the ocean by reason of all the ships side by side. And they are making for the land with all the speed they can. And what can we do?" said she.

"Lady," said Gwydion, "there is none other

counsel than to close the castle upon us, and to defend it as best we may."

"Truly," said she, "may Heaven reward you; and do you defend it. And here may you have plenty of arms."

And thereupon she went forth for the arms, and behold she returned, and the two maidens with her, carrying suits of armor for two men.

"Lady," said he, "do thou accoutre this stripling, and I will arm myself, with the help of thy maidens. Lo, I hear the tumult of the men approaching."

"I will do so gladly," she replied. So she armed him fully, and that right cheerfully.

"Hast thou finished arming the youth?" said Gwydion.

"I have finished," she answered.

"I likewise have finished," said Gwydion. "Let us now take off our arms; for we have no need of them."

"Wherefore?" said she. "Here is the army around the house."

"Oh, lady, there is here no army."

"Why!" cried she. "Whence then was this tumult?"

"The tumult was but to break thy prophecy, and to obtain arms for my son. And now has he got arms without any thanks unto thee."

"By Heaven," said Arianrod, "thou art a wicked man. Many a youth might have lost his life

through the uproar thou hast caused in this cantrev to-day. Now will I lay a destiny upon this youth," she said, "that he shall never have a wife of the race that now inhabits this earth."

"Verily," said he, "thou wast ever a malicious woman, and no one ought to support thee. A wife shall he have notwithstanding."

Thereupon they went unto Math, the son of Mathonwy, and complained unto him most bitterly of Arianrod, and Gwydion showed him also how he had procured arms for the youth. "Well," said Math, "we will seek, I and thou, by charms and illusion, to form a wife for him out of flowers. He has now come to man's stature, and he is the comeliest youth that was ever beheld."

So they took the blossoms of the oak, and the blossoms of the broom, and the blossoms of the meadow-sweet, and produced from them a maiden, the fairest and most graceful that man ever saw. And they baptized her, and gave her the name of Blodeuwedd.

And after she had become his bride, and they had feasted, Gwydion said, "It is not easy for a man to maintain himself without possessions."

"Of a truth," said Math, "I will give the young man the best cantrev that I possess."

"And what cantrev is that?" he inquired.

"The Cantrev of Dinodig," he answered.

Now the cantrev is called at this day Eivionydd and Ardudwy. And the place in the cantrev where

he dwelt was a palace in a spot called Mur y Castell, on the confines of Ardudwy. And there he dwelt and reigned, and both he and his sway were beloved by all the people.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FATE OF LLEW LLAW AND HIS WIFE

ONE day Llew Llaw went forth to Caer Dathyl to visit Math. And on the day that he set out for Caer Dathyl, his wife Blodeuwedd walked in the court. And she heard the sound of a horn; and after the sound of the horn she saw a tired stag go by, with dogs and huntsmen following it. And after the dogs and the huntsmen there came a crowd of men on foot. Seeing these she said, "Send a youth to ask who yonder host may be."

So a youth was sent and inquired who they were. And they said, "This is Gronw Pebyr, the lord of Penllynn." And this the youth reported to her.

Now Gronw Pebyr pursued the stag, and by the River Cynvael he overtook it and killed it. And what with flaying the stag, and baiting his dogs, he was there until the night began to close in upon him. As the day departed and the night drew near, he came to the gate of the court to seek entrance into the castle.

"Verily," said Blodeuwedd, "the chieftain will speak ill of us if we let him at this hour depart to another land without inviting him in."

"Yes, truly, lady," said they, "it will be most fitting to invite him to enter."

So they sent messengers to meet him and bid him to come in. And he accepted her bidding gladly, and came to the court; and Blodeuwedd went to meet him and greeted him, and bade him welcome. "Lady," said he, "Heaven repay thee for thy kindness." And he spent the night in the castle.

Now as Blodeuwedd and Gronw Pebyr conversed together they fell deeply in love with each other, and forgetting her wifely duty she began to plot with Gronw how they might slay her husband and enjoy his possessions. So it was agreed that she should find out by what means he might come to his death.

The following day Llew Llaw Gyffes returned to his home, and the day was spent in discourse and minstrelsy and feasting. And at night when they went to rest, he spoke to Blodeuwedd, and receiving no answer he spoke to her a second time. But for all this he could not get from her one word. "What aileth thee?" said he. "Art thou not well?"

"I was thinking," said she, "of that which thou didst never think of concerning me; for I was sorrowful as to thy death, lest thou shouldst go sooner than I."

"Heaven reward thee for thy care for me," said he. "But until Heaven take me I shall not easily be slain."

"For the sake of Heaven, and for mine, show me how thou mightest be slain. My memory in guarding the secret is better than thine."

"I will tell thee gladly," said he. "Not easily can I be slain, except by a wound. And the spear wherewith I am struck must be a year in the forming. And nothing must be done towards it, except during the sacrifice on Sundays."

"Is this certain?" asked she.

"It is in truth," he answered. "And I cannot be slain within a house nor without it. I cannot be slain on horseback nor on foot."

"Verily," said she, "in what manner, then, canst thou be slain?"

"I will tell thee," said he. "By making a bath for me by the side of a river, and by putting a roof over the caldron, and thatching it well and tightly, and bringing a buck, and putting it beside the caldron. Then if I place one foot on the buck's back, and the other on the edge of the caldron, whosoever strikes me thus will cause my death."

"Well," said she, "I thank Heaven that it will be easy to avoid this."

No sooner had she held this discourse than she sent to Gronw Pebyr, and told him all she had learned. So to carry out their purpose Gronw toiled at making the spear, and that day twelvemonth it was ready. And that very day he caused her to be informed thereof.

"Lord," said Blodeuwedd unto Llew, "I have

been thinking how it is possible that what thou didst tell me formerly can be true. Wilt thou show me in what manner thou couldst stand at once upon the edge of a caldron and upon a buck, if I prepare the bath for thee?"

"I will show thee," said he.

Then she sent unto Gronw, and bade him lie in ambush on the hill which is called Bryn Kyvergyr, on the bank of the River Cynvael. She caused also to be collected all the goats that were in the Cantrev, and had them brought to the other side of the river, opposite Bryn Kyvergyr.

On the next day she spoke to her husband thus: "Lord," said she, "I have caused the roof and the bath to be prepared, and lo! they are ready."

"Well," said Llew, "we will go gladly to look at them."

So the next day they came and looked at the bath. "Wilt thou go into the bath, lord?" said she.

"Willingly will I go in," he replied. So into the bath he went, and he anointed himself.

"Lord," said she, "behold the animals which thou didst speak of as being called bucks."

"Well," said he, "cause one of them to be caught and brought here." So a buck was caught and brought to the bath. Then Llew Llaw rose out of the bath, and he placed one foot on the edge of the bath, and the other on the buck's back.

Thereupon Gronw rose up from the hill which

is called Bryn Cyvergyr, and he rested on one knee, and he flung the poisoned dart, and struck Llaw on the side, so that the shaft started out, but the head of the dart remained in. Then he flew up in the form of an eagle, and gave a fearful scream; and thereafter was he no more seen.

The next day Gronw arose and took possession of Ardudwy. And after he had overcome the land, he ruled over it, so that Ardudwy and Penllyn were both under his sway.

When these tidings reached Math, the son of Mathonwy, great heaviness and grief came upon him, and even much more upon Gwydion than upon him. "Lord," said Gwydion, "I shall never rest until I have tidings of my nephew."

"Verily," said Math, "may Heaven be thy strength."

Then Gwydion set forth, and began to go forward in search of Llew Llaw Gyffes. And he went through Gwynedd and Powys to the confines, and then on into Arvon, and there he came to the house of a vassal in Maenawr Penardd. And he alighted at the house, and stayed there that night. And anon the man of the house and his household came in, and last of all there came the swineherd. Said the man of the house to the swineherd, "Well, youth, hath thy sow come in to-night?"

"She hath," said he, "and is this instant returned to the pigs."

"Where doth this sow go?" said Gwydion.

"Every day, when the sty is opened, she goeth forth, and none can catch sight of her, neither is it known whither she goeth any more than if she sank into the earth."

"Wilt thou grant unto me," said Gwydion, "not to open the sty to-morrow until I am beside the sty with thee?"

"This will I do right gladly," he answered.

Then they went to rest. As soon as the swineherd saw the light of day, he awoke Gwydion; and Gwydion arose and dressed himself, and went with the swineherd, and stood beside the sty. Then the swineherd opened the sty; and as soon as he opened it, behold the sow leaped forth, and set off with great speed; and Gwydion followed her. She went against the course of a river, and made for a brook, which is now called Nant y Llew; and there she halted, and began feeding under a tree. As Gwydion came under the tree and looked upward, he beheld on the top of the tree an eagle. And it seemed to him that the eagle was Llew. Then he sang an Englyn:—

"Oak that grows between the two banks;
Darkened is the sky and hill!
Shall I not tell him by my wounds,
That this is Llew?"

Upon this the eagle came down until he reached the centre of the tree. And Gwydion sang another Englyn:—

"Oak that grows in upland ground,
Is it not wetted by the rain? Has it not been drenched
By ninescore tempests?
It bears in its branches Llew Llaw Gyffes!"

Then the eagle came down until he was on the lowest branch of the tree, and thereupon this Englyn did Gwydion sing:—

"Oak that grows beneath the steep;
Stately and majestic is its aspect!
Shall I not speak it?
That Llaw will come to my lap?"

At this the eagle came down and sat upon Gwydion's knee. And Gwydion struck him with his magic wand, so that he returned to his own form, and behold it was Llew Llaw Gyffes. No one ever saw a more piteous sight, for he was nothing but skin and bone.

Then he arose and went unto Caer Dathyl, and there were brought unto him good physicians that were in Gwynedd, and before the end of the year he was quite healed.

"Lord," said he unto Math, the son of Mathonwy, "it is full time now that I have retribution of him by whom I have suffered all this woe."

"Truly," said Math, "he will never be able to maintain himself in the possession of that which is thy right."

"Well," said Llew, "the sooner I have my right, the better shall I be pleased."

Then they called together the whole of Gwynedd, and set forth to Ardudwy. And Gwydion went on before, and proceeded to Mur y Castell. And when Blodeuwedd heard that he was coming, she was afraid and she took her maidens with her, and fled to the mountain. And they passed through the River Cynvael, and went towards a court that there was upon the mountain; and through fear they could not proceed except with their faces looking backwards, so that unawares they fell into the lake. And they were all drowned except Blodeuwedd herself; and her Gwydion overtook.

And Gwydion said unto her, "I will not slay thee; but I will do unto thee worse than that; for I will turn thee into a bird. And because of the shame thou hast done unto Llew Llaw Gyffes,thou shalt never show thy face in the light of day henceforth; and that through fear of all the other birds. For it shall be their nature to attack thee, and to chase thee from wheresoever they may find thee. And thou shalt not lose thy name, but shalt be always called Blodeuwedd."

Now Blodeuwedd is the name of an owl in the language of this present time; and for this reason is the owl hateful unto all birds.

Then Gronw Pebyr withdrew unto Penllyn, and he despatched thence an embassy. And the mes-

sengers he sent asked Llew Llaw Gyffes if he would take land, or domain, or gold, or silver, for the injury he had received.

"I will not, by my confession to Heaven," said he. "Behold this is the least that I will accept from him: that he come to the spot where I was when he wounded me with the dart, and that I stand where he did, and that with a dart I take my aim at him. And this is the very least that I will accept."

When this was told unto Gronw Pebyr, he said, "Verily, is it needful for me to do thus? My faithful warriors, and my household, and my foster-brothers, is there not one among you who will stand the blow in my stead?"

"There is not verily," answered they. And because of their refusal to suffer one stroke for their lord, they are called the third disloyal tribe even unto this day.

"Well," said he, "I will meet it."

Then they two went forth to the banks of the River Cynvael; and Gronw stood in the place where Llew Llaw Gyffes was when he struck him, and Llew in the place where Gronw was. Then said Gronw Pebyr unto Llew, "Since it was through the wiles of a woman that I did unto thee as I have done, I adjure thee by Heaven to let me place between me and the blow the slab thou seest yonder on the river's bank."

"Verily," said Llew, "I will not refuse thee this."

"Ah," said he, "may Heaven reward thee for this favor.

So Gronw took the slab, and placed it between him and the blow.

Then Llew flung the dart at him, and it pierced the slab, and went through Gronw likewise, so that it pierced through his back. And thus was Gronw Pebyr slain. And there, it is said, may still be seen the slab on the bank of the River Cynvael in Ardudwy, having the hole through it. And therefore is it even now called Llech Gronw.

Then a second time did Llew Llaw Gyffes take possession of the land, and prosperously did he govern it. And, as the story relates, he was lord after this over Gwynedd as long as he lived.

**This story in the original is called "Math the Son of Mathonwy." It is a genuine wondertale of the kind so popular with the early Welsh people. It shows a delicate fancy, the transforming of flowers into a woman, but it seems a little surprising that they did not give to a woman with so sweet an origin a sweeter and lovelier nature.**

**Gwydion was a favorite of the Welsh poets. He was a famous enchanter and learnt the magic arts from Math, who excelled all the enchanters of Welsh fiction except, perhaps, the mighty Merlin and his own pupil Gwydion. The story of Blodeuwedd, "the fair Flower-aspect," has also been a popular theme with the poets. The story here given is largely abridged from the original, the portion omitted being of less interest than that which is given.**

# The Dream of Rhonabwy

IN the days of King Arthur, Madawc, the son of Maredudd, ruled Powys, from Porfoed to Gwauan in Arwystli. And at that time he had a brother Iorwerth. Now Iorwerth had great sorrow and heaviness because of the honor and power that his brother enjoyed, and which he shared not. So he sought his fellows and his foster-brothers, and took counsel with them what he should do in this matter. And they resolved to despatch some of their number to go and seek a maintenance for him. Then Madawc offered him to become master of the household, and to have horses and arms and honor, and to fare like as himself. But this Iorwerth refused.

And upon a time Iorwerth made an inroad into Loegria, slaying the inhabitants, burning their houses, and carrying them away as prisoners. Then Madawc took counsel with the men of Powys, and they determined to place an hundred men in each of the three Commots of Powys to

seek for him. And they spread these men over the plains as far as Nillystwn Trevan.

Now one of the men who was upon this quest was called Rhonabwy. And Rhonabwy and Kynwrig Vrychgoch, a man of Mawddwy, and Cadwgan Vras, a man of Moelvre in Kynlleith, came together to the house of Heilyn Goch. And when they came near to the house, they saw an old hall, whence issued a great smoke; and on entering, they found the floor full of puddles and mounds; and it was difficult to stand thereon, so slippery was it with the mire of cattle. These puddles were so deep that a man might go up to his ankles in water and dirt. And there were boughs of holly spread over the floor, from which the cattle had browsed the sprigs.

When they came to the hall of the house, they beheld cells full of dust, and very gloomy, and on one side of the hall an old hag making a fire. And whenever she felt cold, she cast a lapful of chaff upon the fire, and raised such a smoke, that it was scarcely to be borne as it rose up the nostrils. On the other side was a yellow calf-skin on the floor; and a main privilege was it to any one who should get upon that hide.

When they had sat down, they asked the hag where were the people of the house. But the hag spoke not a word, and only muttered. Thereupon the people of the house entered,—a ruddy, clownish, curly-headed man, with a burthen of fagots on

his back, and a pale, slender woman, also carrying a bundle under her arm. They barely looked at the men, and then kindled a fire with the boughs. And the woman cooked something, and gave them to eat,—barley bread, and cheese, and milk and water.

Soon there arose a storm of wind and rain, so that it was hardly possible to go forth with safety; and being weary with their journey, they laid themselves down, and sought to sleep. When they looked at the couch, it seemed to be made out of a little coarse straw full of dust, with the stems of boughs sticking up through; for the cattle had eaten all the straw that was placed at the head and the foot. And upon the bed was stretched an old russet-colored rug, threadbare and ragged; and a coarse sheet, full of slits, was upon the rug; and an ill-stuffed pillow, and a worn-out cover upon the sheet. After much suffering from the discomfort of their couch, a heavy sleep fell on Rhonabwy's companions; but Rhonabwy, not being able either to sleep or to rest, thought he should suffer less if he went to lie upon the yellow calf-skin that was stretched out on the floor. And there he slept.

As soon as sleep had come upon his eyes, it seemed to him that he was journeying with his companions across a great plain, and he thought that he went towards Rhyd y Groes on the Severn. As he journeyed, he heard a mighty noise, the like

whereof he had never heard before; and looking behind him, he beheld a youth with yellow curling hair, and with his beard newly trimmed, mounted on a chestnut horse, whereof the legs were gray from the top of the forelegs, and from the bend of the hindlegs downwards. The rider wore a coat of yellow satin sewn with green silk; and on his thigh was a gold-hilted sword, with a scabbard of new leather of Cordova, belted with the skin of the deer, and clasped with gold. And over this was a scarf of yellow satin wrought with green silk, the borders of which were likewise green. The green of the caparison of the horse and of his rider was as green as the leaves of the fir-tree, and the yellow was as yellow as the blossom of the broom. So fierce was the aspect of the knight, that fear seized upon them, and they began to flee; and the knight pursued them. And so it was that when the horse breathed forth, the men became distant from him, and when he drew in his breath, they were drawn near to him, even to the horse's chest. When he had overtaken them, they besought his mercy.

"You have it gladly," said the knight; "fear nought."

"Ha, chieftain! since thou hast mercy upon me, tell me also who thou art," said Rhonabwy.

"I will not conceal my lineage from thee," he replied. "I am Iddawc the son of Mynyo; yet not by my name, but by my nickname, am I best known."

"And wilt thou tell us what thy nickname is?"

"I will tell you," he replied. "It is Iddawc Cordd Prydain."

"Ha, chieftain!" said Rhonabwy. "Why art thou called thus?"

"I will tell thee that also. I was one of the messengers between Arthur and Medrawd his nephew, at the battle of Camlan; and I was then a reckless youth, and through my desire for battle I kindled strife between them, and stirred up wrath when I was sent by King Arthur to reason with Medrawd, and to show him that he was his foster-father and his uncle, and to seek for peace, lest the sons of the Kings of the Island of Britain and of the nobles should be slain. And though King Arthur charged me with the fairest sayings he could think of, I uttered unto Medrawd the harshest I could devise. For this reason I am called Iddawc Cordd Prydain, for from this did the battle of Camlan ensue. And three nights before the end of the battle of Camlan I left them, and went to the Llech Las in North Britain to do penance; and there I remained doing penance seven years, and after that I gained pardon."

Then they journeyed over the plain as far as the ford of Rhyd y Groes on the Severn. And for a mile around the ford on both sides of the road they saw tents and encampments, and heard the clamor of a mighty host. As they came to the edge of the ford, they beheld King Arthur, sitting

on a flat island below the ford, having Bedwini the bishop on one side of him, and Gwarthegyd the son of Kaw on the other. And a tall, auburn-haired youth stood before him, with his sheathed sword in his hand, and clad in a coat and cap of jet-black satin. His face was white as ivory, his eyebrows black as jet, and such part of his wrist as could be seen between his glove and his sleeve was whiter than the lily, and thicker than a warrior's ankle.

Then they beheld another troop coming towards the ford; and these from their horses' chests upwards were whiter than the lily, and below blacker than jet. And they saw one of these knights go before the rest, and spur his horse into the ford in such a manner that the water dashed over Arthur and the bishop and those holding counsel with them, so that they were as wet as if they had been drenched in the river. As he turned the head of his horse, the youth who stood before King Arthur struck the horse over the nostrils with his sheathed sword, so that, had it been with the bare blade, it would have been a marvel if the bone had not been wounded as well as the flesh.

Then the knight drew his sword half out of the scabbard, and asked of him, "Wherefore didst thou strike my horse? Whether was it in insult, or in counsel unto me?"

"Thou dost indeed lack counsel. What madness caused thee to ride so furiously as to dash the water of the ford over Arthur and the consecrated

bishop and their counsellors, so that they were as wet as if they had been dragged out of the river?"

"As counsel, then, will I take it," said the knight. So he turned his horse's head round towards his army.

"Iddawc," said Rhonabwy, "who was yonder knight?"

"The most eloquent and the wisest youth that is in this island,—Adaon, the son of Taliesin."

"Who was the man that struck his horse?"

"A youth of froward nature,—Elphin, the son of Gwyddno."

Then Iddawc took Rhonabwy behind him on his horse, and that mighty host moved forward, each troop in its order, towards Cevndigoll. When they came to the middle of the ford of the Severn, Iddawc turned his horse's head, and Rhonabwy looked along the valley of the Severn. And he beheld two fair troops coming towards the ford; one troop of brilliant white, whereof every one of the men had a scarf of white satin with jet-black borders. And the knees and the tops of the shoulders of their horses were jet-black, though they were of a pure white in every other part. And their banners were pure white, with black points to them all.

"Iddawc," said Rhonabwy, "who are yonder pure white troop?"

"They are the men of Norway; and March, the

son of Meirchion, is their prince. And he is cousin unto King Arthur."

And further on he saw a troop whereof each man wore garments of jet-black, with borders of pure white to every scarf; and the tops of the shoulders and the knees of their horses were pure white. And their banners were jet-black with pure white at the point of each.

"Iddawc," said Rhonabwy, "who are the jet-black troop yonder?"

"They are the men of Denmark; and Edeyrn, the son of Nudd, is their prince."

When they had overtaken the host, King Arthur and his army dismounted below Caer Badou, and he perceived that he and Iddawc journeyed the same road as the King. After they had dismounted, he heard a great tumult and confusion amongst the host; and such as were then at the flanks turned to the centre, and such as had been in the centre moved to the flanks. Then, behold, he saw a knight coming, clad, both he and his horse, in mail, of which the rings were whiter than the whitest lily, and the rivets redder than the ruddiest blood. And he rode amongst the host.

Thereupon they heard a call made for Kadwr, Earl of Cornwall; and behold he arose, with the sword of Arthur in his hand. And upon the sword were the figures of two serpents in gold. And when the sword was drawn from its scabbard, two flames of fire seemed to burst forth from the jaws

of the serpents, and so wonderful was the sword that it was hard for any one to look upon it. At the sight the host became still, and the tumult ceased, and the earl returned to the tent.

"Iddawc," said Rhonabwy, "who is the man who bore the sword of Arthur?"

"Kadwr, the Earl of Cornwall," he replied, "whose duty it is to arm the King on the days of battle."

Then they heard a call made for Eirynwych Amheibyn, Arthur's servant, a red, rough, ill-favored man, having red whiskers with bristly hairs. And behold he came upon a tall red horse, with the mane parted on each side, and on the horse's back a large and beautiful sumter pack. And the youth dismounted before King Arthur, and then drew a golden chair out of the pack, and a carpet of diapered satin. He spread the carpet before the King, and there was an apple of ruddy gold at each corner thereof, and he placed the chair upon the carpet. And so large was the chair, that three armed warriors might have sat therein. The name of the carpet was Gwenn; and it was one of its properties that whoever was upon it no one could see him, yet he could see every one.

And Arthur sat within the carpet, and Owain the son of Urien was standing before him. "Owain," said Arthur, "wilt thou play chess?"

"I will, lord," replied Owain.

So the red youth brought the chess for Arthur

and Owain; golden pieces and a board of silver. And they began to play.

Now while they were thus playing, and when they were best amused with their game, behold they saw a white tent with a red canopy, and the figure of a jet-black serpent on the top of the tent, and red glaring venomous eyes in the head of the serpent, and a red flaming tongue. And there came a young page with yellow curling hair, and blue eyes, and a newly-springing beard, wearing a coat and a surcoat of yellow satin, and hose of thin greenish-yellow cloth upon his feet, and over his hose were shoes of parti-colored leather, fastened at the insteps with golden clasps. And he bore a heavy three-edged sword with a golden hilt, in a scabbard of black leather tipped with fine gold. And he came to the place where the emperor and Owain were playing at chess.

The youth saluted Owain; and Owain marvelled that the youth should salute him, and should not have saluted King Arthur. Now Arthur knew what was in Owain's thought, and he said to Owain, "Marvel not that the youth salutes thee now, for he saluted me erewhile; and it is unto thee that his errand is."

Then said the youth unto Owain, "Lord, is it with thy leave that the young pages and attendants of the King harass and torment and worry thy ravens? If it be not with thy leave, cause the King to forbid them."

"Lord," said Owain, "thou hearest what the youth says: if it seem good to thee, forbid them from my ravens."

"Play thy game," said the King. Then the youth returned to the tent.

That game they finished, and another one they began, and, when they were in the midst of the game, behold, a ruddy young man with auburn curling hair and large eyes, well-grown, and having his beard new-shorn, came forth from a bright yellow tent upon the summit of which was the figure of a bright red lion. He was clad in a coat of yellow satin, falling as low as the small of his leg, and embroidered with threads of red silk. On his feet were hose of fine white buckram; and buskins of black leather were over his hose, whereon were golden clasps. In his hand was a huge, heavy, three-edged sword, with a scabbard of red deer-hide, tipped with gold.

As he came to the place where Arthur and Owain were playing at chess, he saluted Owain. And Owain was again troubled at his salutation; but Arthur minded it no more than before. Then the youth said unto Owain, "Is it not against thy will that the attendants of the King harass thy ravens, killing some, and worrying others? If it be against thy will, beseech him to forbid them."

"Lord," said Owain to King Arthur, "forbid thy men, if it seem good to thee."

"Play thy game," said the King. And the youth returned to the tent.

Soon that game was ended, and another one begun. As they were beginning the first move of the game, they beheld at a small distance from them a tent speckled with yellow, and with the figure of an eagle of gold upon it, and a precious stone on the eagle's head. And coming out of the tent they saw a youth with thick yellow hair upon his head, fair and comely, and a scarf of blue satin upon him, and a brooch of gold in the scarf upon his right shoulder as large as a warrior's middle finger. Upon his feet were hose of fine Totness, and shoes of parti-colored leather, clasped with gold; and the youth was of noble bearing, fair of face, with ruddy cheeks and large hawk's eyes. In the hand of the youth was a large lance, speckled yellow, with a newly sharpened head; and upon the lance a banner was displayed.

Fiercely angry, and with rapid pace, the youth came to the place where King Arthur was playing at chess with Owain. Thereupon he saluted Owain, and told him that his ravens had been killed, the chief part of them, and that such of them as were not slain were so wounded and bruised, that not one of them could raise its wings a single fathom above the earth.

"Lord," said Owain to the King, "forbid thy men."

"Play," said the King, "if it please thee."

Then Owain said to the youth, "Go back, and wherever thou findest the strife at the thickest, there lift up the banner, and let come what Heaven pleases."

So the youth returned to the place where the strife bore hardest upon the ravens, and he lifted up the banner; and as he did so they all rose up in the air, fierce and wrathful, clapping their wings in the wind, and shaking off the weariness that was upon them. And recovering their energy and courage, furiously and with exultation did they, with one sweep, descend upon the heads of the men who had erewhile caused them anger and pain and damage; and they seized some by the heads and others by the eyes, and some by the ears and others by the arms, and carried them up into the air; and in the air there was a mighty tumult with the flapping of the wings of the triumphant ravens, and with their croaking; and there was another mighty tumult with the groaning of the men that were being torn and wounded, and some of whom were slain.

King Arthur and Owain marvelled at the tumult as they played at chess; and, looking, they perceived a knight upon a dun-colored horse coming towards them. And marvelous was the hue of the horse. His right shoulder was bright red, and from the top of his legs to the centre of his hoof was bright yellow; and both the knight and his horse were fully equipped with heavy foreign

armor. The clothing of the horse from the front opening upwards was of bright yellow sendal. A large gold-hilted one-edged sword had the youth upon his thigh, in a scabbard of light-blue, tipped with Spanish laton. The belt of the sword was of dark-green leather with golden slides, and a clasp of ivory upon it, and a buckle of jet-black upon the clasp. A helmet of gold was on the head of the knight, set with precious stones of great virtue; and at the top of the helmet was the image of a flame-colored leopard with two ruby-red stones in its head, so that it was astounding for a warrior, however stout his heart, to look at the face of the leopard, much more at the face of the knight. He had in his hand a blue-shafted lance; but from the haft to the point it was stained crimson-red with the blood of the ravens and their plumage.

The knight came to the place where Arthur and Owain were seated at chess; and they saw that he was harassed and vexed and weary as he came towards them. The youth saluted King Arthur, and told him that the ravens of Owain were slaying his young men and attendants. And King Arthur looked at Owain and said, "Forbid thy ravens."

"Lord," answered Owain, "play thy game." And they played. And the knight returned back towards the strife, and the ravens were not forbidden any more than before.

And when they had played a while, they heard

a mighty tumult, and a wailing of men, and a croaking of ravens, as they carried the men in their strength into the air, and, tearing them betwixt them, let them fall piecemeal to the earth. And during the tumult they saw a knight coming towards them, on a light-gray horse, and the left foreleg of the horse was jet-black to the centre of his hoof. And the knight and the horse were fully accoutred with huge heavy blue armor; and a robe of honor of yellow diapered satin was upon the knight, and the borders of the robe were blue. And the housings of the horse were jet-black, with borders of bright yellow. And on the thigh of the youth was a sword, long and three-edged and heavy. And the scabbard was of red cut leather, and the belt of new red deerskin, having upon it many golden slides, and a buckle of the bone of the sea-horse, the tongue of which was jet-black. A golden helmet was upon the head of the knight, wherein were set sapphire-stones of great virtue; and at the top of the helmet was the figure of a flame-colored lion, with a fiery-red tongue, issuing above a foot from his mouth, and with venomous eyes, crimson-red, in his head.

And the knight came, bearing in his hand a thick ashen lance, the head whereof, which had been newly steeped in blood, was overlaid with silver. And the youth saluted the King, saying, "Lord, carest thou not for the slaying of thy pages, and thy young men, and the sons of the nobles of

the Island of Britain, whereby it will be difficult to defend this island from henceforward forever?"

"Owain," said King Arthur, "forbid thy ravens."

"Play thy game, lord," Owain replied.

So they finished the game, and began another; and as they were finishing that game, lo, they heard a great tumult, and a clamor of armed men, and a croaking of ravens, and a flapping of wings in the air, as they flung down the armor entire to the ground, and the men and the horses piecemeal.

Then they saw coming towards them a knight on a lofty-headed piebald horse. The left shoulder of the horse was of bright red, and its right leg, from the chest to the hollow of the hoof, was pure white. And the knight and horse were equipped with arms of speckled yellow, variegated with Spanish laton; and there was a robe of honor upon him and upon his horse, divided in two parts, white and black; and the borders of the robe of honor were of golden purple. And above the robe he wore a sword, three-edged and bright, with a golden hilt; and the belt of the sword was of yellow goldwork, having a clasp upon it of the eyelid of a black sea-horse, and a tongue of yellow gold to the clasp. Upon the head of the knight was a bright helmet of yellow laton, with sparkling stones of crystal in it, and at the crest of the helmet was the figure of a griffin, with a stone of many virtues in its head. And he had an ashen spear

in his hand, with a round shaft, colored with azure-blue. And the head of the spear was newly stained with blood, and was overlaid with fine silver.

In great wrath came the knight to the place where King Arthur was; and he told him that the ravens had slain his household, and the sons of the chief men of his island, and he besought him to cause Owain to forbid his ravens. Then King Arthur besought Owain to forbid them; and he took the golden chessmen that were upon the board, and crushed them until they became as dust. At this Owain ordered Gwres, the son of Rheged, to lower his banner. So it was lowered, and all was peace.

Then Rhonabwy inquired of Iddawc who were the first three men that came to Owain to tell him his ravens were being slain.

"They were men," said Iddawc, "who grieved that Owain should suffer loss; his fellow-chieftains and companions;" and he gave the names of the men.

"Who," said Rhonabwy, "were the last three men who came to Arthur, and told him that the ravens were slaughtering his men?"

"The best of men," said Idawc, "and the bravest, and who would grieve exceedingly that Arthur should have damage in aught;" and these he also named.

And with that, behold four and twenty knights came from Osla Gyllellvawr to crave a truce of Ar-

thur for a fortnight and a month. And King Arthur arose and went to take counsel with them. And he came to where a tall auburn, curly-headed man was a little way off, and there he assembled his counsellors,—all the wise men of his kingdom.

"Iddawc," inquired Rhonabwy, "who was the auburn-haired man to whom they came just now?"

"Rhun the son of Maelgwn Gwynedd, a man whose prerogative it is that he may join in counsel with all."

"And wherefore did they admit into counsel with men of such dignity, a stripling so young as Kadyriaith the son of Saidi?"

"Because there is not throughout Britain a man better skilled in counsel than he."

Thereupon, behold, bards came and recited verses before Arthur, and no man understood those verses but Kadyriaith only, save that they were in King Arthur's praise.

Then there came four and twenty asses, with their burdens of gold and of silver, and a tired, wayworn man with each of them, bringing tribute to Arthur from the Islands of Greece. Then Kadyriaith the son of Saidi besought that a truce might be granted to Osla Gyllellvawr for the space of a fortnight and a month, and that the asses and the burdens they carried might be given to the bards as the reward for their stay, and that their verse might be recompensed during the time of the truce. And thus it was settled.

"Rhonabwy," said Iddawc, "would it not be wrong, think you, to forbid a youth who gave counsel so wise as this from coming to the councils of his lord?"

Then Sir Kay arose, and he said, "Whosoever will follow King Arthur, let him be with him tonight in Cornwall; and whosoever will not, let him be opposed to the King even during the truce."

And through the greatness of the tumult that ensued, Rhonabwy awoke. And when he awoke he saw that he was upon the yellow calf-skin, having slept three nights and three days.

And this tale is called the Dream of Rhonabwy. And this is the reason that no one knows the dream without a book, neither bard nor gifted seer, because of the various colors that were upon the horses, and the many wondrous colors of the arms and of the panoply, and of the precious scarfs, and of the virtue-bearing stones.

**This is one of the least interesting stories of the series, but it contains some exquisite word painting and I have included it mainly for the charm of these descriptions. The reader will note the sense of color and of rich ornamentation in the various descriptions, showing the taste of the early Welsh people for bright coloring, costly ornaments, and display in dress.**

# The Story of Taliesen

MANY years ago King Gwyddno Garanhir was sovereign of a territory bordering on the sea. Upon the shore of the sea near to his castle he had a weir; and in that weir he caught as many fish as were worth an hundred pounds a year. It was the custom to draw the weir every May evening of each year.

Now King Gwyddno had an only son named Elpin, and he was a hapless and careless youth, and knew not how to supply even his daily needs. This grieved his father sorely, for he thought his son must have been born in an evil hour and would never amount to anything. By the advice of his council his father granted him the drawing of the weir that year to see if good luck would ever befall him, and also to give him the chance to earn something wherewith to begin the world. It was on the last day of April that this was decided.

So in the evening Elpin went to look at the weir, and behold there was nothing in it but a leathern

bag that hung upon a pole of the weir. Seeing this the river warden said unto Elpin, "All thy ill-luck aforetime was as nothing compared with this; for now I fear that thou hast destroyed the virtues of the weir which always yielded the value of an hundred pounds every May eve; and to-night there is nothing in it but this leathern bag."

"Well," said Elpin, "there may be the value of a hundred pounds in the bag for all you know."

So they took up the leathern bag, and he who opened it saw therein the forehead of an infant child, the fairest that he had ever seen. As he looked upon the child he exclaimed *taliesin*, which is the Welsh word for "Behold a radiant brow."

"Taliesin shall he be called," said Elpin. So saying he lifted the boy in his arms, and lamenting his bad luck, placed the boy before him on his horse. Then he made his horse amble gently and thus carried the infant as softly as if it had been sitting in the easiest chair in the world.

And as they rode the boy spoke and sang a hymn of praise and consolation to Elpin, and this was the song which he sang:

"Fair Elpin, cease to lament!
Never in Gwyddno's weir
Was there such good luck as this night.
Being too sad will not avail;
Better to trust in God than to forebode ill;
Weak and small as I am

On the foaming beach of the ocean
In the days of trouble, I shall be
Of more service to thee than three hundred
salmon."

This was the first poem that Taliesin had ever sung, and he did it to console Elpin in his grief that the produce of the weir was lost, and what was even worse than that, that all the world would consider that it was therefore his fault and ill-luck.

Amazed at hearing this, Elpin spoke to the boy and asked him whether he was human or a spirit. In answer to this question, Taliesin sang, and this is the song that he sang:

"I have been formed a comely person;
Although I am but little, I am highly gifted;
Into a dark leathern bag was I thrown,
And on a boundless sea was I sent adrift.
From seas and from mountains
God brings wealth to the fortunate man."

Soon Elpin came to the house of his father, Gwyddno, bringing Taliesin with him. His father asked him whether he had had a good haul of fish in the weir, to which Elpin replied that he had caught that which was better than fish.

"What is that?" his father asked.

"A bard," replied Elpin.

"Alas! what will a bard profit thee?" said his father.

To which Taliesin himself replied, "He will profit him more than the weir ever profited thee." Then his father, Gwyddno, turned to the child and said, "Art thou able to speak, and thou so little?"

And Taliesin answered him, "I am better able to speak than thou art to question me."

"Let me hear what thou canst say," quoth Gwyddno.

In reply to this Taliesin sang the following:—

"Three times have I been born, I know by meditation;
All the sciences in the world are collected in my breast,
For I know what has been, and what hereafter will occur."

At this Gwyddno was much amazed and knew not what to say or think.

Then Elpin sought his wife and gave to her the boy, and she received him tenderly and lovingly. And from that day forward good luck came to Elpin, and he increased in riches more and more, day after day, and in love and favor with the King and his people. And there Taliesin abode until he was thirteen years old.

Now it chanced that when Taliesin was thirteen years old that Elpin went by a Christmas invitation

to visit his uncle, Maelgwyn Gwynedd, who held open court on Christmas week in one of his castles. And there were present all the great men of the realm, lords of both degrees, spiritual and temporal, with a vast throng of knights and squires.

At the feast one of the lords arose and said, "Is there in the whole world so great a king as Maelgwyn, or one upon whom heaven has bestowed so many gifts;—form, and beauty, and meekness, and strength, besides all the powers of the soul?"

And the others said that Heaven had given one gift that exceeded all the others, and that was the beauty and grace, and the wisdom and modesty of his queen, whose virtues surpassed those of all the ladies and noble maidens throughout the whole kingdom.

And with this they put questions to one another, as—Who had braver men? Who had fairer or swifter horses or greyhounds? Who had more skillful or wiser bards than Maelgwyn.

Now at that time the bards were in great favor with the exalted of the kingdom; and none performed the office of those who are now called heralds, unless they were learned men, not only expert in the service of kings and princes, but studious and well versed in the lineage and arms and exploits of princes and kings, and in discussions concerning foreign kingdoms and the ancient things of this kingdom, and chiefly of the annals of the first nobles; and who also were prepared al-

ways to give their answers in various languages—Latin, French, Welsh and English. And together with this they were great chroniclers and recorders, and skillful in framing verses and in making englyns in every one of these languages. Now of these bards there were at that feast within the palace of Maelgwyn as many as four and twenty, and chief among them all was one named Heinin Vardd.

When all had made an end of praising the king and his gifts, it befell that Elpin spoke in this wise, —"Of a truth, none but a king may vie with a king; but were my uncle not a king, I would say that my wife was as virtuous as any lady in the kingdom, and that I have a bard who is more skillful than all the king's bards."

At this the bards were much displeased and in a short time some of them went to the king and told him all the boastings of Elpin; and the king was wroth and ordered him to be thrown into a strong prison, until he might show the truth as to the virtues of his wife and the wisdom of his bard.

When Elpin had been put in a tower of the castle, with a thick chain about his feet, (it is said that it was a silver chain, because he was of royal blood), the king sent his son Rhun to inquire into the virtues of Elpin's wife. Now Rhun was the most graceless man in the world, and there was neither wife nor maiden with whom he held con-

verse that was not evil spoken of and suffered in reputation.

While Rhun was going in haste towards Elpin's dwelling, being fully minded to bring disgrace upon his wife, Taliesin told his mistress how that the king had placed his master in prison, and how that Rhun was coming in haste to strive to bring disgrace upon her. Wherefore he advised his mistress to array one of the maids of her kitchen in her own apparel, and to diguise herself in the apparel of the maid. This the noble lady gladly did; and she loaded the maid's hands with the best rings that she and her husband possessed.

In this guise Taliesin caused his mistress to have the maiden sit at the board in her place at supper; and thus make her seem to be the mistress and the mistress seem to be the maid. And when in due time they were seated at supper in the manner that has been said, Rhun suddenly arrived at Elpin's dwelling, and was received with apparent joy, for all the servants knew him. And they brought him into the room where they sat at supper, and the maiden who was dressed like the mistress rose up from the table and welcomed him gladly. And then she sat down to supper again and Rhun took a seat beside her.

Then Rhun began jesting with the maid, who still kept the semblance of her mistress. Now as they ate and drank, the maid became so intoxicated that she fell asleep; though it was thought

that it was a powder that Rhun had put into the drink that made her sleep so soundly. Then while she slept Rhun cut from her hand her little finger, whereon was the signet ring of Elpin, which he had sent to his wife as a token a short time before.

Then Rhun returned to the king with the finger and the ring as a proof to show that he had cut it from the hand of the mistress without her awakening from her sleep of intoxication. At this the king was greatly rejoiced and he sent for his councillors, to whom he told the story. And he caused Elpin to be brought out of prison, and he showed him the finger and the ring and laughed at him and chided him for his boast.

But Elpin replied, "With thy leave, mighty king, I cannot deny my ring, for it is known of many; but verily I assert that the finger around which it is was never attached to the hand of my wife; for there are three notable things pertaining to this finger none of which ever belonged to any of my wife's fingers. The first is that it is certainly known to me that this ring would never remain upon her thumb, whereas you can plainly see that it is hard to draw it over the joint of the little finger of the hand whence this was cut; the second thing is, that my wife has never let pass one Saturday since I have known her without paring her nails before going to bed, and you can see fully that the nail of this little finger has not been pared for a month. The third is, truly, that the hand whence

this finger came was kneading rye-dough within three days before the finger was cut therefrom, and I can assure your highness that my wife has never kneaded rye-dough since she has been my wife."

The king was mighty wroth with Elpin for so stoutly withstanding him respecting the virtue of his wife; and he ordered him back to his prison, saying that he should not be loosed thence until he had proved the truth of his boast, as well concerning the wisdom of his bard as the virtues of his wife.

In the meantime his wife and Taliesen remained at Elpin's dwelling. Taliesin had shown her how Elpin was in prison because of them; but he bade her not to grieve for that he would go to Maelgwyn's court to free his master. Then she asked him in what manner he would set him free. To which he answered her in a song:—

I Taliesin, chief of bards,
With a wise Druid's words
Will set kind Elpin free
From haughty tyrant's bonds.

Then Taliesin took leave of his mistress, and came to the court of Maelgwyn whom he found just about sitting down in his hall to dine in royal state, as was the custom in those days for kings and princes to do at every feast.

As soon as Taliesin entered the hall, he placed himself in a quiet corner near the place where the bards and minstrels were wont to come in doing their service and duty to the king by proclaiming his power and bounty. So when the bards began to sing and proclaim the power of the king, at the moment when they passed the corner where he sat crouching, Taliesin pouted out his lips after them, and played upon his fingers saying, "blerwm, blerwm!"

They took but little notice of him as they went by, but proceeded forward till they came before the king, unto whom they made their obeisance with their bodies as was their wont, without speaking a single word, but pouting out their lips and making mouths at the king, playing "blerwm, blerwm!" upon their lips with their fingers, as they had seen the boy do.

This sight caused the king to wonder, and to think within himself that the bards were drunk with drinking many liquors. Wherefore he commanded one of his lords who served at the board, to go to them and desire them to collect their wits and to consider where they stood, and what it was fitting for them to do. This the lord did gladly; but they ceased not their folly any more than before. Whereupon the king sent him a second time, and a third time, requesting them to go forth from the hall. At last the king sent one of his squires to give a blow to the chief of them, named Heinid

Vardd, and the squire took a broom and struck the chief bard on the head so that he fell back in his seat.

Then he arose and went on his knees to the king and besought him leave by the king's grace, to show that this their fault was not through want of knowledge, neither through drunkenness, but by the influence of some spirit that was in the hall. And he said, "Methinks it is through the influence of a spirit that sits in the corner yonder in the form of a child."

Then forthwith the king commanded the squire to fetch the child before him; at which the squire went to the nook where Taliesin sat, and brought him before the king who asked him what he was and whence he came. And in reply to the king, Taliesin said in verse:

"Primary chief bard am I to Elpin,
And my native country is the region of the summer stars;
I was with my Lord in the highest sphere
On the fall of Lucifer into the depths of hell.
I have been in Asia with Noah in the ark,
I have seen the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah,
I was in India when Rome was built,
I have now come here to the remnant of Trovia,
I have been teacher of all intelligences;
I am able to instruct the whole universe."

When the king and his nobles had heard his song they were full of wonder, for they had never heard the like from a boy so young as he. And when the king knew that he was the bard of Elpin, he bade Heinin, his first and wisest bard, to answer Taliesin and to strive with him. But when the bard came, he could do nothing but play "blerwm" upon his lips; and when the king sent for the others of the four and twenty bards, they all did likewise, and could do no otherwise. Then Maelgwyn asked the boy Taliesin what was his errand at the court; and he answered in a song:—

"Elpin, the son of Gwydno,
Is in the land of Artro
Secured by thirteen locks,
For praising his instructor;
Therefore, I, Taliesin,
Chief of the bards of the west,
Shall loosen Elpin
Out of a golden fetter."

Then he sang a riddle to which they all listened in wonder:—

"Discover thou what is
The strong creature from before the flood,
Without flesh, without bones,
Without vein, without blood;
Without head, without feet;

But when the bard came he could do nothing but play

It will neither be older nor younger
Than at the beginning.
Behold how the sea whitens
When first it comes,
When it comes from the south,
When it strikes on the coasts.
It is in the field, it is in the wood,
But the eye cannot perceive it,
One Being has prepared it,
By a tremendous blast,
To wreak vengeance
On Maelgwyn Gwynedd."

While he was thus saying his riddle, there arose a mighty storm of wind, so that the king and all his nobles thought the castle would fall upon their heads. And the king in his fright commanded that they should bring Elpin in haste from his dungeon, and place him before Taliesin. And when Taliesin saw him chained, he sang a verse, and immediately the chains dropped from his limbs. Then they sent for Elpin's wife and when she came befor the king, at Taliesin's request, she showed the king her hands, and they saw that no fingers were wanting, and that the charge made against her was false.

Then the king commanded Rhun to come before him to punish him for his false accusation of Elpin's wife; but Taliesin told them how he had been deceived by one of the maids being dressed

like the queen, at which they all laughed at Rhun, who felt ashamed and greatly disgraced.

In this manner did Taliesin set his master free from prison and protect the good name of his mistress and silence the bards so that not one of them dared to say a word. Then Elpin and his wife and the boy Taliesin returned to the court of Gwyddno, where they lived in great happiness. And thus it is seen that, since the bard was worth more to Elpin than a haul of fish, that wisdom is better than wealth.

Taliesin, literally, the "Radiant Brow," was a Welsh bard of the sixth century. He is the greatest of the ancient Welsh poets, and is called by his countrymen the "Prince of Song." He became bard at King Arthur's court, and was one of the most distinguished in that glorious assemblage of brave knights and beautiful women. Many poems ascribed to him are preserved among the Welsh people and believed to be genuine productions of his genius.

The extracts from the songs of Taliesin here given are very brief as compared with the original, but they are full enough to give an idea of their character, and as thus abridged will be more interesting to the young, for whom this work is prepared. Adult readers of the book will be interested in examining the complete poems as found in the edition of the Mabinogion of Lady Charlotte Guest.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 001 197 010 0